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OLD PARIS

WORKS OF
HENRY C. SHELLEY



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L. C. PAGE & COMPANY
53 BEACON STREET, BOSTON, MASS.



GUESTS FOR THE OLD HOTELS.



INTERIOR OF AN OLD COACHING INN.

Old Paris

Its Social, Historical, and Literary Associations

Including an Account of the Famous Cabarets,
Hôtels, Cafés, Salons, Clubs, Pleasure Gardens,
Fairs and Fêtes, and the Theatres of the
French Capital in Bygone Times.

By

Henry C. Shelley

Author of "Inns and Taverns of Old London," "The
British Museum: Its History and Treasures," etc.

Illustrated



L. C. PAGE & COMPANY
BOSTON   MDCCCCXII

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First Impression, July, 1912

THE COLONIAL PRESS
C. H. SIMONDS & CO., BOSTON, U. S. A.

3.00
© Cl. A320120

PREFACE

READING in a French newspaper that some twelve thousand English people were in Paris, a London scribe made the angry comment: "Such eagerness to visit a capital not too remarkable for the morality and decency its various societies exhibit, is more to the advantage of our sneering neighbours than to our national character."

That charming example of British insularity was written more than a century ago; in 1802, to be exact; and hence at a time when the achievements of Napoleon were sorely trying the nerves of John Bull. Notwithstanding, however, that the relations of the two nations were in a highly strained condition, there were still some twelve thousand English people who were unable to resist the fascination of the French capital. Such a fact is eloquent of the attractiveness of Paris. But, as the following pages will demonstrate, that was nothing new. From the time when Europeans began to travel no capital was so potent a lodestone to the pleasure-seeker. And the explanation is written at large in the ensuing chapters, for they offer many convincing proofs of Horace Walpole's assertion that the Parisian passed his days in "perpetual opera."

Owing to the repeated transformation of the aspect of Paris, and the bewildering frequency of changes in the names of the streets, it has been thought best to adhere in the main to that broad topographical division of the city for which the Seine is responsible. This simple classification is the more excusable because practically all the inns, taverns, cafés, pleasure-gardens, theatres, and other buildings figuring in this book have been demolished. It is an exploration in the spirit, then, and not in the body, to which the reader is invited.

H. C. S.

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OLD PARIS

CHAPTER I

OLD PARIS

“ OLD Paris ” is a protean term. It may mean the Paris of Hugh Capet, or the Paris of the first Napoleon. Indeed, if that is old which has ceased to exist, large sections of the Paris of the third Napoleon might be included in the category.

For the capital of France has suffered from friends and enemies alike. No doubt there are thousands who will agree with Lytton's young noble, the Marquis de Rochebriant, when he confessed “ it is what is new in Paris that strikes and enthral me,” but the other thousands who find much to fascinate in the lighter side of the life of bygone generations will regret that so much of interest has wholly disappeared. Victor Hugo had the right spirit. When, at the time plans were being discussed for the reconstruction of the Rue de Rivoli, some iconoclast proposed pulling down the Tour St. Jacques, the novelist exclaimed:

“ Demolish the Tour St. Jacques! No! Demolish the architect who made the suggestion! ”

Such indignation was natural in the author of "Notre Dame." The Paris he knew best and loved most was the Paris of the fifteenth century. At that period it was, he affirmed, not a fine city only, but a homogeneous city, "an architectural and historical production of the Middle Ages — a chronicle in stone."

Nay, Victor Hugo's admiration for old Paris was not restricted to the Middle Ages. It extended to the period of the Renaissance. If less harmonious in those days, the city was, perhaps, still more beautiful. But there the novelist stopped; with the dying out of the influence of the Renaissance, beauty and harmony were both set at naught. In the heterogeneous Paris of his own day he saw but two buildings worthy of praise, the Tuileries and the Hôtel-de-Ville; the remainder were specimens of different ages, and the capital was so quickly increasing in jerry-built houses as to prompt a Parisian to exclaim, "Our fathers had a Paris of stone — our sons will have one of plaster." And then the novelist, it will be remembered, proceeded to dismiss the structures of his day as "the finest Savoy cake ever made of stone," "a very distinguished piece of pastry," and so on.

Had Victor Hugo, however, been suddenly called upon to live his daily life in that old Paris which he extolled so highly, he might have found it necessary to qualify his enthusiasm. When regarded from the

comfortable environment of modern life ancient times are apt to acquire a roseate hue not entirely in accordance with fact. That the French capital has for so many centuries proved a magnet to natives of other cities cannot, at any rate, be explained in the terms of architecture. Stones are a wretched substitute for bread anywhere.

Perhaps, then, the dark side of the picture should be presented first, especially as even Montaigne admitted that Paris had "her spots, her blemishes, and her warts."

According to a native historian, the houses of Paris in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were nothing better than cottages; only four streets in the city were paved; and they were very narrow and dirty, and often inundated by the Seine. Some of those conditions persisted for many generations. Take, for example, the report of James Howell in the second decade of the seventeenth century.

Although admitting that Paris was the "rendezvous of all foreigners" and that the buildings were "indifferently fair," he added that the streets were "generally foul" at all seasons of the year, "which I impute," he continued, "first to the position of the city being built upon an isle (the Isle of France, made so by the branching and serpentine course of the river of Seine), and having some of her suburbs seated high, the filth runs down the channel and settles in many places within the body of the city,

which lieth upon a flat; as also for a world of coaches, carts, and horses of all sorts that go to and fro perpetually. . . . Hence it comes to pass that this town (for Paris is a town, a city, and a University) is always dirty, and it is such a dirt, that by perpetual motion it is beaten into such a thick black unctuous oil that where it sticks no art can wash it off of some colours, insomuch that it may be no improper comparison to say, that an ill name is like the crot (the dirt) of Paris, which is indelible; besides the stain this dirt leaves, it gives also so strong a scent that it may be smelt many miles off if the wind be in one's face as he comes from the fresh air of the country."

Sixty years later a brief passage in a gossip letter from the French capital gives a vivid glimpse of another discomfort of life in Paris. "I do not think the colds can be greater in Muscovie than they have been here for now almost three months. The night before last twenty people were found dead in several streets of this city, and scarce a night passeth without seven or eight being found starved, though all the day great fires are made almost in every street."

Poverty and misery, too, were rife in the city when Matthew Prior went thither as a diplomat in 1698; and the streets were still so narrow that when a friend stopped his coach to speak with him a hundred other coaches were brought to a standstill until

the interview was over. Nor were conditions improved when Horace Walpole visited the city in 1765. He exclaimed upon the dirt and the narrowness of the streets, while Lapland was in "the torrid zone in comparison of Paris." The wealthy, it appeared, were little better off than those poor folk who froze to death notwithstanding the "great fires" in the streets. "We have had such a frost for this fortnight," Walpole wrote, "that I went nine miles to dine in the country to-day, in a villa exactly like a greenhouse, except that there was no fire but in one room. We were four in a coach, and all our chinks stopped with furs, and yet all the glasses were frozen. We dined in a paved hall painted in fresco, with a fountain at one end; for, in this country, they live in perpetual opera, and persist in being young when they are old, and hot when they are frozen." As he wrote, Walpole was so benumbed that he had to pause at every sentence to breathe upon his fingers.

Voltaire, however, told quite another story. He boasted that a citizen of Paris was surrounded by more luxury than a Roman general returning in triumph to the Capitol, and expatiated in glowing terms upon the thousands of lamps which illuminated the city, and the cleanliness of its streets, and the good order which prevailed.

And yet in 1787, some ten years after Voltaire's death, all the old complaints were repeated once

more. According to the testimony of Arthur Young, the streets were as narrow as ever, and as crowded with coaches, and as dirty. Walking was a "toil and a fatigue to a man, and an impossibility to a well-dressed woman." There were no sidewalks, and the pungent and indelible mud of Howell's days was still abundant. Nor was this the prejudiced verdict of a foreigner. A native of the city expressed, two years later than Young, his amazement that so many abuses were allowed to exist — that the streets had no pavements, that lamps were unlit and that the infiltrations of cesspools polluted the air. In fact, even so late as 1826, Sydney Smith complained that Paris was badly lit at night and that the lack of sidewalks was a great evil.

Yet, and this is an amazing thing in the history of great cities, Paris has held a supreme position among the capitals of Europe for many centuries. Notwithstanding those serious disadvantages concerning which there is a surprising unanimity — despite its arctic winter climate, its cramped streets, its evil-odoured mud, its crowded and ill-lit thoroughfares, no other city has been such a "rendezvous of all foreigners." That it should be "the pole, the axis, the centre, his all" for the Frenchman, as Amiel declared, is not surprising; Montaigne, though the dirt of Paris lessened his "kindness," avowed that the city captured his heart in his infancy, and "the more beautiful cities I have seen



THE ENGLISHMAN IN PARIS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

since, the more the beauty of this still wins upon my affection; ” what is more significant, because disinterested, is that the natives of other lands, and notably the insular English, equally admit the spell of the famous city.

In fact, every witness already cited for the prosecution can be recalled for the defence. The mud-stained Howell, besides hailing Paris as the “ rendezvous of all foreigners,” admitted the city to be “ sumptuous and strong; ” that chronicler of street bonfires and frozen wayfarers voted the snuff of Paris to be “ the best; ” Walpole confessed “ there is a *douceur* in the society of the women of fashion that captivates me; ” Arthur Young, at the end of his grumbling, admitted the French capital to be “ a most eligible residence for such as prefer a great city; ” and Sydney Smith’s conclusion was that as between London and Paris “ there is not the smallest possibility of a comparison.”

Most, indeed, of the faultfinders provide their own antidote. Thus, a somewhat puritanical English visitor of the year 1682, after assuring his father that the “ great feast *de bon Dieu* ” was calculated to win as many from popery as “ their wheedling priests can gain in a whole year,” added that he had not time to describe the great variety of the city’s “ divertisements.” If much research does disclose the case of another Englishman who found Paris “ dull ” in the early eighteenth century,

he explains the reason when he adds that the play-houses and other places of amusement were closed owing to a religious celebration.

Countless other witnesses testify with unqualified enthusiasm. There is Montesquieu, for example, who, by the pen of his Persian observer, characterized Paris as "the most luxurious city in the world," and, in his own person, confessed that he could not visit it for a year at least because he had not sufficient money to participate in its pleasures. Another acclaimed the capital as "the finest theatre in the world;" a third voted the Parisians as indifferent to everything except "pleasure and ease;" and even at the end of the seventeenth century a Sicilian visitor is made to declare that "there is so much luxury here that whoever would wish to enrich three hundred cities has only to destroy Paris."

In bygone centuries, then, as in the present age, the capital of France was the mart and playground of the world. Not merely its snuff, but its wines, its jewels, its garments were the best. If a dandy returned to London gorgeously arrayed and bedecked, his wig made of wire, his buckles glittering with diamonds, the only conclusion possible was that he had been to Paris. If such an inveterate gambler as Charles James Fox wished to dissipate his inheritance in the briefest possible time, he also crossed the English Channel. Even Samuel Johnson, though



THE FÊTE DIEU.

he found French meals "gross" and revolted at the idea that a footman should finger the sugar for his coffee, imagined himself "growing young" when in Paris.

What was the secret of this charm which captivated all alike? Which made Howell forget the odours of Paris mud, bewitched the fastidious Walpole, placated the grumbling Young, and rejuvenated the phlegmatic Johnson? Why has Paris at all times been so interesting to "both the libertine and the philosopher?"

Walpole supplies the answer in the letter quoted above. The Parisian lives in "perpetual opera" and persists in "being young when he is old." *Faire bonne vie* is his creed. Nothing is so important as to lead a merry life. Never was his faith in his creed so severely tested as at the time of the French Revolution. Yet it withstood even that assay. A participant in those days of red terror assures us that it was no uncommon experience for him to be stopped in the street by an entire stranger, and gravely asked his opinion as to one or other of the tragic events then transpiring; but, before he could recover from his surprise at being thus abruptly accosted, his questioner would be off singing some popular ballad. No wonder he declared "ether is not half so volatile as a Parisian." He mounted the guillotine scaffold with a hop, step, and a jump, took a pinch of snuff, cracked a joke

with the executioner, and died with a *bon-mot* on his lips.

Paris, then, stands for the wine of life. Emerson was not surprised that young men found the freedom of that city greatly to their liking. It has always been the same. Reposing quietly among the ancient Latin letters in the archives of Canterbury Cathedral is a long epistle addressed to the prior of Christchurch in the thirteenth century. It was penned by one John Parent, a poor scholar of the monastery, who had been sent to Paris in pursuit of knowledge. But John, alas! had fallen a victim to the Parisian spirit; instead of attending to his books, he had been indulging in the pleasures of life; and now some one has informed the prior, and the prior has stopped his allowance, and John pleads his poverty and attempts to recover the prior's favour by telling him of a wonderful book which has come under his notice. That was all six hundred years ago, but John's extremity would appeal to many a Latin Quarter student of the twentieth century.

With his volatile nature, the Parisian is essentially gregarious. To live in a "perpetual opera" necessitates the company of his kind. And hence it comes to pass that life in Paris is intensely social. As a natural corollary there is no capital in the world, whether of ancient or modern times, where the inn and tavern and wine-shop, the café and res-

taurant, the dancing-hall and pleasure-garden, the club and salon and theatre have played so large a part in the life of the city. It has often been said that the history of Paris is the history of France; it is equally true that the history of the *auberge* and *cabaret* and *café* is the history of Paris.

In what far-off year the first page of that history was written is unknown. One of the earliest dates in the chronology of Parisian conviviality is 1268, in which year statutes were framed for the more orderly regulation of the important art of brewing. This, of course, was in the reign of St. Louis, whose habit of watering his wine was not to be taken as a precedent by the purveyors of beer. Indeed, the statutes were so stringent that the beer-drinkers of Paris in the thirteenth century were evidently provided with an excellent article. It had, for one thing, to be free from all taint of sacrilege, inasmuch as no one was allowed to either brew beer or "remove it in drays" on Sundays or feasts of the Virgin. Its ingredients, too, were to be honest and above suspicion, for "nothing shall enter into the composition of beer but good malt and hops, well gathered, picked, and cured, without any mixture of buck-wheat, darnel, etc., to which end the hops shall be inspected by juries to see that they are not used after being heated, mouldy, damp, or otherwise damaged." Further, no one was allowed to set up as a brewer until he had served a five years' appren-

ticeship and another three years in partnership with an acknowledged master of the craft, while "beer yest brought by foreigners" had to be inspected by a jury before it could be exposed for sale.

Perhaps, however, the most suggestive of these statutes is that which reads: "No beer shall be hawked about the streets, but shall all be sold in the brew-houses to bakers and pastry-cooks, and to no others." This would seem to indicate — though it is dangerous to found a generalization on a single law — that in 1268 the innkeeper as such did not exist in Paris. Perhaps, however, he already flourished but was under the necessity of buying his beer through a middleman. Or, on the other hand, the statute may have been designed to foster the excellent principle of combining eating with drinking. Whatever the facts were, it is a matter of record that the inn had made its appearance in Paris early in the fourteenth century.

Appropriately enough, bearing in mind the scenes of lawlessness which were to be associated with its successors of later generations, one of the earliest Parisian hostelries of which there is record survives in history through its connection with a dark deed of the early fourteenth century. The chief actors in this deed were an accomplished Flemish forger named Jeanne de Divion and Robert, the grandson of Robert the second Count of Artois. When the latter was killed in battle in 1302 his

province of Artois, owing to his son Philip having predeceased him, was awarded to his daughter Matilda, but Philip's son Robert was a stout believer in the principle of the Salic law and was not disposed to see his aunt take possession of Artois. At this juncture, then, he called Jeanne de Divion to his aid, and that adroit manipulator of documents proceeded to Paris to carry out such forgeries as would establish her employer's claim to the countship of the province. Jeanne made her headquarters at the hostelry known as the Eagle, which was situated in the Rue Saint-Antoine and had for its overlords the brethren of the abbey of Saint-Maur-des-Fossés.

So skilfully did Jeanne employ her art at the Eagle that the forged documents there produced gave rise to one of the most remarkable legal contests of the fourteenth century. The documents were specious enough to keep Matilda's inheritance in the balance for some years, for it was not until 1322 that the plot was brought home to Robert and his accomplice. Whether, as one story has it, he was imprisoned but escaped, or was merely sentenced to banishment, is not of vital importance; what is clear is that the forgeries carried out in that ancient inn of Paris were fraught with far-reaching consequences. They were a moving cause, indeed, in the Hundred Years' War between France and England, for than the exiled and embittered Robert

of Artois no one did more to urge Edward III of England into that protracted conflict.

What is true of most other cities, that the poets have liberally supplemented the labours of the topographers in preserving the history of inns and taverns, also holds good in the case of Paris. When to their references are added the chance allusions of such chroniclers as Froissart and the deliberate descriptions of anonymous satirists of social life it becomes possible to piece together a fairly comprehensive picture of those old-time havens for "man and beast." Enguerrand de Monstrelet, that "very honourable and peaceable" continuator of Froissart, confines himself to mentioning the names of four inns which were of good repute in the reign of Charles VI, that is, The Sword, The Bear, The Dry Tree, and The Fleur de Lys. These, perhaps, or some of them, were in the recollection of the poet Eustache Deschamps when, during his travels in Germany, he reflected with sorrow on the comfortable hostelries he had left behind in Paris. Evidently he did not get value for his money in Germany, and his afflictions were augmented by the stubbornness with which the Teutons refused to speak any language save their own. Hence these tears:

*"Princes, par la vierge Marie,
On est, en la Cossonnerie,
Aux Canètes ou aux Trois Rois,*

*Mieux servy en l'hostellerie,
Car ces gens que je vous escrie
Là n'y parleront que thiois (allemand)."*

As will be seen, one of the inns which the poet compared with the German hostelries to the disadvantage of the latter was named The Three Kings. That sign, which perpetuated of course the gospel legend of the three Eastern magi, persisted in Paris and throughout France for many centuries. Its retention at a time when the Revolution was at its height led to an amusing interchange between Dr. John Moore and a grave-looking man of whom he made an inquiry. "He asked where I lodged. I answered, 'Aux Trois Rois.' 'Aux Trois Rois!' he repeated with a grimace. '*Ma foi, monsieur, vous avez choisi là des hôtes qui ne sont plus à la mode.*' "

Froissart has preserved the memory of an inn which must have been of considerable importance in his day. It was called The Straw Castle and was situated "in the road which they call the Croix-du-Tirouer." As the chronicler implies that The Straw Castle was affected by Sir Thomas de Percy, that "gentle, reasonable, and gracious" knight who finally joined Hotspur in rebellion and paid the usual penalty, and was also the favourite resort of other powerful nobles, it was obviously far superior to the average inn of Paris. Evidently it was a superior example of that type which was created by the neces-

sity of providing suitable quarters for the numerous ambassadors constantly coming to the French court from England and other countries.

Conspicuous among such inns in the sixteenth century was The Angel, conveniently situated in the Rue de la Huchette. It was at this house, in 1500, were entertained the ambassadors of the Emperor Maximilian to Louis XII, a fact which speaks eloquently in its favour, for, at that time, the French monarch was anxious to secure the support of the Roman sovereign. When they reached Paris the ambassadors were received with stately ceremonial by the mayor and merchants of the city, who conducted them to The Angel, which, says a historian, "was very fine for those times." Half a century later the house still retained its high reputation, for it was specially chosen by Henry II as a lodging for an envoy from the king of Algiers. Once more the mayor and merchants assembled to greet the visitor and conduct him in state to his temporary abode. No doubt they obeyed to the letter the command of the king to show their guest "all he wished to see in Paris," and, in addition, they provided him with a bodyguard of the city's archers who accompanied him on all his sightseeing and mounted guard at the doors of The Angel.

Contemporaneously with those hostelries which enjoyed the proud honour of sheltering the guests of the king, Paris soon began to be amply supplied

with inns of a more modest character. Ambassadors were not the only people for whom catering was necessary; there were pilgrims, and curious travellers, and merchants to be supplied with bed and board. To what extent the ordinary inns of Paris had multiplied by the middle of the fifteenth century is illustrated by an old poetic monologue entitled "*Le Pèlerin Passant*." The poem describes the woes of the transient, for "The Passing Pilgrim" is nothing more than an early catalogue of the tribulations which are not obsolete in modern times. The hero of the monologue, Pierre by name, was acquainted with the anguish caused by a rapidly depleting purse, and not unfamiliar with the difficulty of finding suitable accommodation at a moderate price. Incidentally, however, the chief interest of his narrative is that it preserves the names, though not the locations, of many Parisian inns of the mid-fifteenth century.

On his first arrival in the city Pierre put up at The Shield of France, a hostelry with which he had no fault to find save that the expense of staying there soon made serious inroads upon his ready money. Resolved to make a change, he seeks accommodation at The Shield of Brittany, the hostess of which seems to have been "of good family" but in reduced circumstances. She had, besides, an enviable reputation as an innkeeper. Unfortunately, however, The Shield of Brittany reserved the shel-

ter of its roof and the delicacies of its table for such travellers as came from the province whose name it bore, and as Pierre was not a Breton he was not qualified to partake of its hospitality. Nor was he more successful at The Shield of Alençon, though there the problem resolved itself into a question of terms rather than a matter of nativity.

Continuing his search, Pierre next reached The Red Hat, the appearance of which greatly took his fancy. He is ready to indite a testimonial on the spot:

*“ Un grand logis, une grand' court,
C'estoit un paradis terrestre. ”*

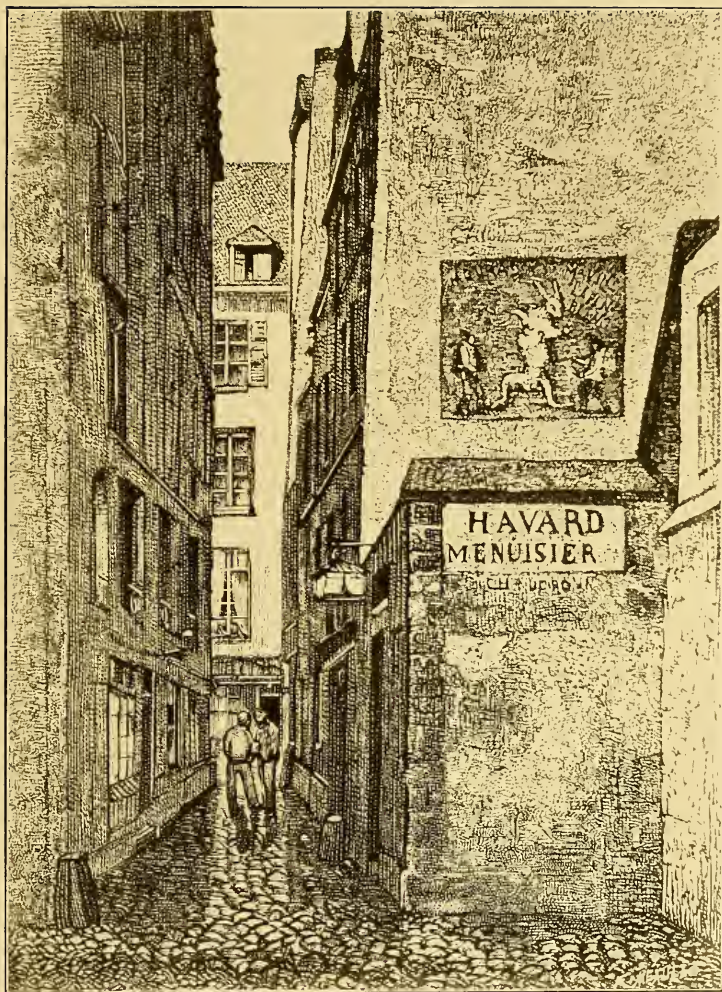
Other travellers shared that opinion; such a fine house and handsome courtyard promised indeed a paradise on earth. But here the difficulty was neither birthright nor cash; The Red Hat was so famous that its doors were besieged by an eager crowd of would-be customers. Pierre, however, shared the weakness common to travellers; he wanted to get settled in his room as speedily as possible, and hence was in no mood to hang around The Red Hat for two or three hours with the prospect of drawing a blank after all. He had other disappointments in store. On knocking at The Shield of Orleans he learns that the innkeeper has exchanged his occupation for the greater excitement of military service, while the host of The Shield of Bourbon, a

house rivalling The Red Hat in appearance, has just been carried to his grave. At another inn he is able to get a meal but no room; "full up" is the excuse; but, finally, he secures shelter for the night at The Shield of Calabria.

As Pierre does not quote the tariff of The Shield of France it would be unjust to burden its host's memory with the imputation of extortion; probably the chief reason for the shrinkage of the pilgrim's funds was due to participation in the gambling for which the inn was notorious. That inn, as a matter of fact, was on the black list of the police authorities; it was one of the many houses in which travelling merchants were relieved of their gold either by gambling sharks or by the stab of a poniard. Either a kindly Providence or the hints of friends saved Pierre from trying another inn of that type. They were plentiful enough — The Shield of St. George, The Tin Plate, The Pestle, The Crayfish, The Fat Margaret, etc. — and they were of various degrees of iniquity.

Most of these taverns — for they were taverns rather than inns, that is, haunts for drunkards rather than hostleries for decent people — were naturally more frequented by the natives of Paris than by the strangers within her gates. The exterior and interior of one of those haunts as they appeared in the fifteenth century have been limned once for all by Victor Hugo with all the minute real-

ism of a Flemish genre study. Here is the outward seeming of that tower in the Court of Miracles which was the cabaret of the Truands: "This tower was the point most alive, and consequently the most hideous, of the Truandry. It was a sort of monstrous hive, which was humming day and night. At night, when all the remainder of the rabble were asleep, when not a lighted window was to be seen in the dingy fronts of the houses in the square, when not a sound was heard to issue from its innumerable families, from those swarms of thieves, loose women, and stolen or bastard children, the joyous tower might always be distinguished by the noise which proceeded from it, by the crimson light which, gleaming at once from the airholes, the windows, the crevices in the gaping walls, escaped, as it were, from every pore. The cellar, then, formed the public-house. The descent to it was through a low door and down a steep staircase. Over the door there was, by way of sign, a marvellous daub representing new-coined sols and dead chickens, with this punning inscription underneath: *Aux sonneurs pour les trépassés*, that is 'The ringers for the dead.' " And then there is this etching of the interior: "The apartment, of a circular form, was very spacious; but the tables were so close together and the tipplers so numerous, that the whole contents of the tavern, men, women, benches, beer-jugs, the drinkers, the sleepers, the gamblers, the able-bodied, the crippled,



A SIDE-STREET CABARET: THE WHITE RABBIT.

seemed thrown pell-mell together with about as much order and arrangement as a heap of oyster shells. A few greasy candles were burning upon the tables; but the grand luminary of the tavern, that which sustained in the pot-house the character of the chandelier in an opera house, was the fire. That cellar was so damp that the fire was never allowed to go out even in the height of summer; an immense fireplace, with a carved mantelpiece, and thick-set with heavy iron dogs and kitchen utensils, had in it, then, one of those large fires composed of wood and turf, which, at night, in a village street on the continent, cast so red a reflection through the windows of some forge upon the wall opposite. A large dog, gravely seated in the ashes, was turning before the glowing fuel a spit loaded with different sorts of meat."

While, however, such an interior was no doubt reduplicated in most of its features in such haunts of vice as *The Pestle*, *The Crayfish*, *The Shield of St. George*, *The Tin Plate*, and *The Black Head*, it must not be forgotten that, apart from these dens and also removed from the category of inns most affected by travellers, there were, from the fifteenth century onward, numerous taverns which drew the larger number of their clients from the Bohemian artists and writers who have for many generations constituted one of the most picturesque elements of Parisian life. As a considerable number of those

resorts played a conspicuous part in the literary history of the city their legends must be reserved for subsequent chapters; here, however, mention may be made of several which belong to the earliest period of Parisian jollity.

And among such inns pride of place belongs to those which are associated with the lawless life of François Villon. That man of many *aliases*, student, poet, and burglar, the “first wicked sansculotte,” as Stevenson called him, “the man of genius with the moleskin cap,” naturally became “the hero of a whole legendary cycle of tavern tricks and cheateries.” But, thanks to the confessions and allusions of his own poems, some of his roistering exploits can be assigned to specific houses, and notably to The Pestle and The Mule. The former is immortalized in the poet’s “Large Testament:”

*“Où pend l’enseigne du Pestel
A bon logis en bon hostel;”*

the latter in the “Little Testament.”

Apparently there was little to choose between the two houses. Each was a thieves’ haunt. From each the police made frequent and large hauls of criminals. If a distinction was possible, it may have consisted in robberies being planned at The Mule and enjoyed at The Pestle. We know, at any rate, that one considerable enterprise was matured at The Mule and was celebrated by that convivial

supper at which Villon introduced Tabary to the other members of his house-breaking crew. Ordered in advance by Tabary, the supper was a substantial and well-wined meal, and concluded with the swearing-in of Villon's new comrade. Thus fortified with flesh and spirit, the band set out from The Mule about midnight to pay their attentions to the well-stored College of Navarre. And rich booty awarded their assault, sufficient, indeed, to pay for many copious draughts and substantial meals at The Mule or The Pestle. In this and many another midnight raid Villon seems to have been the leader of the lawless gang, a startling example in his own person, when his verse is kept in mind, of the inscrutable duality of human nature. That he was conscious of the contrast his own lines testify:

“ I know the doublet by the grain;
The monk beneath the hood can spy;
Master from man can ascertain;
I know the nun's veiled modesty;
I know when sportsmen fables ply;
Know fools who scream and dainties stow;
Wine from the butt I certify;
All things except myself I know.”

But Villon bequeathed to the taverns of old Paris a heritage more infamous than the thefts recalled by The Pestle and The Mule. His most shameless ballad, the “ *Grosse Margot*,” is accepted by the best critics as a page torn from the poet's life and

not merely as the exercise of an unbridled imagination. And its record of unspeakable debauchery had for result that a tavern of ill fame, a house better described by the old English word "a stew," took to itself the significant name of The Fat Mag and became the headquarters of the lowest prostitutes and their brutal paramours. The Fat Mag was long since swept away, but its nefarious career was protracted until near the close of the seventeenth century. To these inns of dubious reputation, the haunts of vice and the resorts of picklocks and cutthroats, should be added that known as The Green Sign.

A pleasanter chapter in the history of Parisian festivity is that which has been preserved in an anonymous book of the early seventeenth century. This volume is concerned with the distressful experiences of a man who had incurred his wife's wrath through his drinking habits. Caught in the act of emerging from an obscure tavern, he was soundly beaten by his unsympathetic spouse, and, while still smarting from her blows, had the happy thought of appealing to Apollo for full and explicit information concerning the "houses of honour" possessed by Bacchus in the city of Paris. The choice of divinity was a happy one, for Apollo, who at once granted the prayer of his suppliant, seems to have had an enviable and exhaustive knowledge of the subject. If the assaulted husband did not learn where he

might continue his imbibation without danger of discovery by his heavy-handed wife, certainly the fault could not be charged to the account of Apollo.

First on the divinity's list of desirable taverns, according to the summary given by Édouard Fournier, was the famous *Pomme de Pin*, or Pineapple, which, however, had lost some of its high reputation. Notwithstanding that fact it was likely to be crowded, and in that event Apollo advised his inquirer to try The Little Devil. Then followed a lengthy list of other estimable houses, located in all parts of the city. One who found himself in the vicinity of the Palais could not do better than breakfast at The Great Head; after hearing mass at the church of Saint Eustache the most convenient resort was the celebrated house of Cormier; for a climax to a theatrical performance at the Hôtel de Bourgogne it was impossible to make a wiser choice than The Three Mallets. Apollo's suggestions, indeed, were inexhaustible; for all times and places and occupations he had a suitable inn or tavern on his list. Thus, those who played tennis or bowls at the Faubourg Saint Germain were commended to The Golden Eagle; litigants who had business at the Châtelet had their choice of The Valorous Roland or The Galley or The Chessboard; courtiers on their way from the Louvre could find refreshment at the "first tavern in France, the Boesselière," where, however, the charges were so high that hun-

gry and thirsty persons of moderate means might be glad to seek a substitute in The Three Funnels; players at mall would find their needs well catered for at The Shield or The Bastille; while an amorous male taking a walk with his lady in the garden of the Temple could secure a quiet room at The Scarfe. Nor did Apollo overlook the case of the man in need of a hair of the dog that bit him. Such a sufferer from an over-night indulgence would, he imagined, seek to cool his brow and calm his thoughts by a morning walk in the vicinity of the cemetery Saint-Jean, and in that event he could not do better than drop in at The Torches, famous for its cordial capable of resuscitating a dead man. For still more sober moods there was such a dainty inn as The Three Spoons.

Apollo's list, it will be inferred, kept primarily in view the needs of natives; it must not be imagined, however, that no advance had been made in catering for the wants of such visitors as the fifteenth-century Pierre whose experiences have already been described. On the contrary, hostelries specially adapted for the requirements of foreign travellers had multiplied beyond number by the seventeenth century. And Parisian hosts had already hit upon the subtle expedient of adopting for their inns the names of famous foreign towns. Hence such "springes to catch woodcocks" as the Hôtel Homberg, The Prince of Orange, the Hôtel Scotland, the

Hôtel Savoy, the Hôtel Venice, etc. Such bait has not even yet lost its attractions for the angling caterer, but it is interesting to learn that it has been a snare for the nibbler from time immemorial. Take, for example, the sad but common case of those two Dutchmen who visited Paris in the mid-seventeenth century and fell victims to the lure of the Hôtel Homburg. Their fond anticipations of "a home from home" were rudely disappointed. Of course they were "treated badly," as were seven or eight Germans who had fallen into the same trap. But the two Dutchmen had sufficient philosophy to deduce the proper moral. Foreigners who lodged in Paris with people of their own country "profited nothing and knew little or nothing of the nation they visited. Also, they were deceived and ill-treated by their compatriots, who abused the little knowledge they had of the land in which they were living." And yet those same Dutchmen removed to The Prince of Orange!

Remembering that the king of France so early as the thirteenth century claimed the right of supervising the breweries of Paris, and of taxing the product of those establishments, it is not surprising to learn that inns and taverns were also allowed to carry on business only "by permission of the King" — "*Hostellerie, ou Taverne, par la permission du Roy*," as the inscription ran. And those houses, in addition to the announcements dictated

by the ingenuity of the hosts, such as " Weddings or banquets supplied here " or " Lodging for horsemen or pedestrians," were required to exhibit their scale of prices in large characters.

Also, in due course, such a detail as the signboard of inn or tavern was brought within the province of the law. An edict of 1567 and another of ten years later commanded all innkeepers to expose a sign on a conspicuous part of their houses; and in 1693 an ordinance stipulated that " Tavernkeepers must put up signboards and a bush. Nobody shall be allowed to open a tavern without having a sign and a bush." This stringency led to an unexpected development; being compelled to display a sign many innkeepers indulged in the biggest they could lay their hands on. " I have seen," wrote a chronicler of the mid-seventeenth century, " hanging from the shops, shuttlecocks six feet high, pearls as large as a hogshead, and feathers reaching up to the third story! " So the law had to be invoked once more, this time to bring the compulsory signboards within reasonable dimensions.

Doubtless it will not have escaped the notice of the reader that the names selected for the inns and taverns of old Paris illustrate a change in type, and that as an approach is made to more modern times the word " hôtel " comes into use in preference to " inn " or " tavern." The latter change must have added greatly to the confusion of such visitors to

Paris as were ignorant of the French habit of working a single word to death. Than "hôtel" there is probably no word in any language which can compare with it as a linguistic scullion. It may mean a mansion, a town-hall, a hospital, a mint, a post-office, a mart, a theatre, or — perhaps a hotel! The ingenious person who first wrested "hôtel" from its original meaning, that is, the town house of a noble or wealthy family, and brought it into competition with "inn" and "tavern," may be held in grateful memory by those public caterers who have a fancy for high-sounding names, but no one who studies the history of old Paris can fail to anathematize his ghost.

As for the transformation noticeable in the types of names used for inns and taverns, that was a natural and inevitable development. As in the great cities of other lands, the earliest sign was no doubt that of the bush, perhaps an ivy spray, as that plant was sacred to Bacchus, or, failing that, a branch of a tree, or a bunch of leaves, or even a wisp of straw. The ordinance quoted above shows that the bush in some form or other had to be displayed by Paris innkeepers long after other signs had become common. Those additional signs laid toll on the animal kingdom, as in the cases of The Eagle or The White Cat; or the accoutrements of warfare, as exemplified by The Shield and The Sword; on the emblems of religion, as witness The

Golden Cross and The Angel; or on the heraldry of provinces, as illustrated by The Shield of Brittany. From the latter source, indeed, was derived the long line of Red and Blue Lions and other animals of abnormal colour. As the family arms were displayed upon the mansions of nobles, and as those mansions gave hospitality to travellers, what was more natural than that a lion gules should become The Red Lion and a lion azure The Blue Lion?

That the signs of the old Paris inns and taverns, whether painted, or carved in wood, or worked in wrought iron, were often notable as works of art is amply demonstrated by the examples preserved at the Louvre or the Musée Carnavalet, while several remarkable specimens may yet be seen *in situ*, the latter including the sign “*Au Soleil d’Or*” at a corner of the Rue Montmartre and the exquisite wrought iron grille of the “*Saint Esprit*” in the Rue Saint Honoré. But too many of those picturesque reminders of the past have utterly perished, sharing in that respect the fate of countless famous hostelries which have been ruthlessly demolished in the interests of the “improvement” of Paris. Happily, however, the pages of history and biography have given their legends an undying renown.

CHAPTER II

INNS AND TAVERNS OF THE LEFT BANK

EVIDENCE has already been adduced to show that by the middle of the sixteenth century the inns and taverns of Paris had multiplied beyond enumeration. They were to be found in all parts of the ancient town: in the *Cité*, that island of the Seine which was the cradle of the Roman *Lutetia*; in the *Ville*, or the town proper, which occupied the right hand of the river; or in the University, which was the name given to the district on the left bank. If, however, at that period, a vote had been taken among the convivial spirits of Paris with the object of ascertaining the most popular house of good cheer, the odds are heavy that the top of the pole would have been occupied by the *Pomme de Pin*, otherwise The Pineapple.

Perhaps Victor Hugo made that resort the mental model for his description of the "illustrious cabaret of the *Pomme d'Eve*;" in any event his picture may aid the imagination in visualizing The Pineapple, for in ancient days the hostelries of Paris probably possessed more features in common than their modern successors. With a pine-tree, then, substituted for the woman in the case, this genre

study of the *Pomme d'Eve* may, in the absence of a more authentic sketch, suggest the interior of The Pineapple: "The principal room was on the ground floor, very large and very low, supported in the middle by a heavy wooden pillar, painted yellow. There were tables all round; shining pewter pots hung up against the wall; a constant abundance of drinkers, and girls in plenty; a large casement looking to the street; a vine at the door, and over the door a creaking iron plate, with an apple and a woman painted upon it, rusted by rain, and turning with the wind upon an iron pin." Add the countless lighted candles, and the loud peals of laughter, and doubtless the resemblance to The Pineapple is fairly complete.

Should it be objected that Victor Hugo was writing of the fifteenth century, and that the frequenters of The Apple of Eve were of a low type, the answer is that The Pineapple was in existence in the fifteenth century and evidently counted among its clients men of dubious reputation. That tavern, indeed, was on Villon's calling-list, and its low roof often re-echoed his coarse praises of "Blanche the cobbler's daughter" and the rare physical charms of the "buxom sausage-seller at the corner."

Remembering the great fame which Villon achieved as a poet, it is not improbable that his patronage of The Pineapple was the original cause of the popularity of that tavern among literary Bohe-

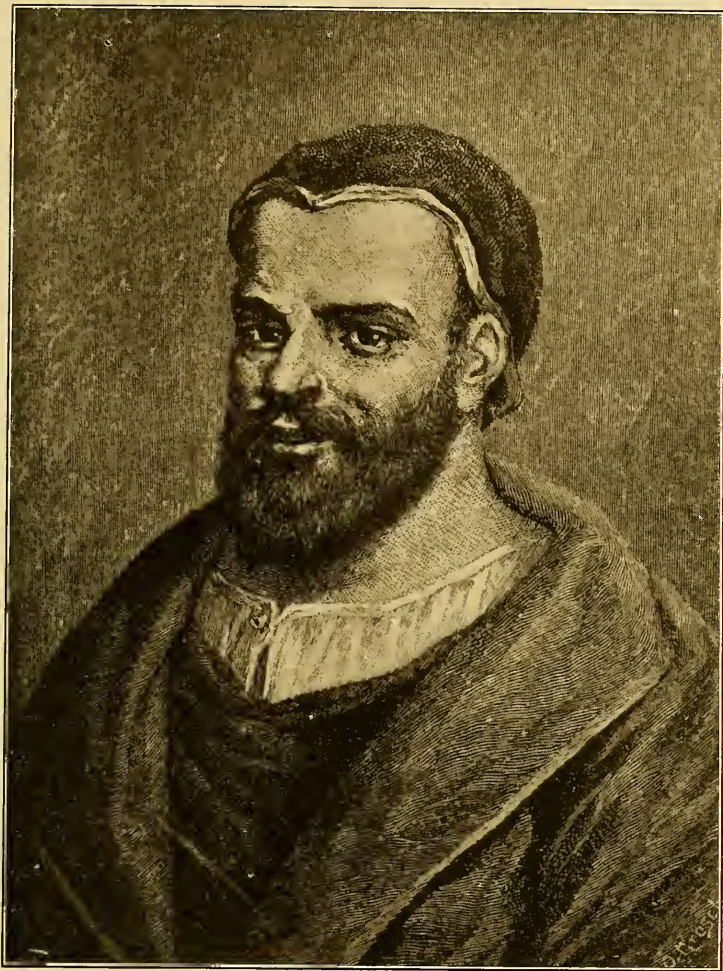
mians; what is certain, at any rate, is, that from the early sixteenth century onward the house was the favourite resort of a long line of famous writers. Allusions to its good cheer are of frequent occurrence in French literature, from the history of Pantagruel to a comedy by Pierre de l'Arrivey. Ronsard celebrated its praises in the spirit of a true Bacchanalian; and his disciple, Mathurin Régnier, enshrined it in one of his satires:

*“ Oû maints rubis balais, tous rougissants de vin,
Montraient un Hacitur à la Pomme de Pin.”*

That its fame had not declined in the second half of the seventeenth century is obvious from the allusions of Howell, who, though an Englishman, had discovered the tavern and in writing a friend assured him that he and an acquaintance remembered him “ lately at *La pomme du pin* in the best liquor of the French grape.” Howell’s visit to The Pineapple coincided with the period when the tavern was the favourite haunt of that vinous poet, Claude Chapelle. Not that he restricted his libations to any one tavern; on the contrary, he was most generous with his patronage, and is credited with a knowledge of drinking-houses comparable with that of Apollo; but even such an indiscriminate tippler had his preferences and when he set out with the determination to get drunk his footsteps invariably led him to The Pineapple. It was at the door of that tavern he

was accosted one day by Boileau, who entertained a warm friendship for his fellow poet and professed to be alarmed at his drinking propensities. "Your inordinate love of the bottle will surely harm you," said Boileau. Chapelle appeared to be impressed by the warning and ready to listen to further advice. "Come," he answered, "let us turn in here, and I promise to hear with patience all you have to say." Boileau accepted the invitation, but the vintage of The Pineapple proved so seductive that the temperance lecture was forgotten and the two friends became so intoxicated that they had to be sent home in a coach.

Perhaps, however, the most distinguished name connected with the history of The Pineapple is that of François Rabelais. It is true that the higher criticism declares we must abandon the legend which represents the creator of Gargantua and Pantagruel and Panurge as "a gluttonous and wine-bibbing buffoon, as an unfrocked priest, as a sort of ecclesiastical Falstaff." And further, we are assured that the birthplace of Rabelais was not an inn, nor was his father an innkeeper. These are distressing corrections. Rabelais as the son of an innkeeper and born in an inn fitted somehow into the atmosphere of his book. But even when the higher criticism has done its worst, it cannot obliterate the fact that Rabelais, while still a monk, was a consenting party to the purchase of an inn on behalf of his monastery;



FRANÇOIS RABELAIS.

that he did resume the secular habit; that his letters show him to have been a lover of good wines; that he made a special visit to Paris to attend a sumptuous dinner; and that, above all, the chronicles of Pantagrue! perpetuate the fame of The Pineapple. If a man may be judged by his writings, there never was one of whom it might seem safer to postulate that he was, not a buffoon, but a lover of taverns and their meat and drink. To the unsophisticated reader, indifferent to the philosophical subtleties of orthodox Pantagrue!ism, the pages of Rabelais seem to fairly ooze the Bacchanalian spirit. It is admitted that the great writer was often in Paris, sometimes for a year or more at a stretch, and his allusion to The Pineapple as chief among those meritorious taverns where the students of Paris regaled themselves with "beautiful shoulders of mutton seasoned with parsley" can bear no other interpretation than that he was numbered among its most enthusiastic clients. So it was believed through many generations, and that faith in the most illustrious of all the many literary associations of The Pineapple no doubt contributed not a little to the long-continued prosperity of the house. Its golden days lasted to the end of the seventeenth century, when its enriched host bequeathed it as a reward to his accomplished cook.

How it came to pass that Lord Herbert of Cherbury failed to find The Pineapple must be a mystery

to all who accept that vainglorious autobiographer at his own estimate. He was no stranger to Paris. That city was his objective when he set out on his travels and wild-oat-sowing in 1608, and he visited it several times prior to 1619, when he settled there as ambassador of James I. According to his own story, Herbert was very much a man about town, a hard drinker, a fighter of duels, and an irresistible lady-killer. As he was something of a poet, too, he would surely have been in his element among the versifiers of *The Pineapple*. Besides, his residence was in the Faubourg St. Germain, and thus but a short distance from the famous tavern.

By reading between the lines of his autobiography, however, a solution is obtainable. Whatever he might have done before, after he became ambassador Lord Herbert thought it beneath his dignity to be seen in inns. Hence when Prince Charles, afterwards Charles I, tarried a day or two in Paris on his way to Madrid in quest of a wife, the ambassador decided against paying a visit to the British heir because he was lodging in an inn in the Rue St. Jacques. "If I came alone in the quality of a private person," wrote Herbert of the incident, "I must go on foot through the streets; and because I was a person generally known, might be followed by some one or other, who would discover whither my private visit tended, besides that those in the inn must needs take notice of my coming in that

manner" — with more to the same effect, as though the writer were anxious to prove that he did not visit the inn solely because he wished to protect Prince Charles' incognito. The chief cause for complaint with Herbert, however, is that he did not set down the name of that inn of the Rue St. Jacques. The street is still notable for a large number of ancient houses, and it would have been interesting to identify the building associated with the Prince's romantic visit in 1623, especially as it was during that visit he had his first glimpse of the maiden who was to become his wife. A century later the street became one of the most Bohemian thoroughfares of Paris, frequented, it will be remembered, by the hero of two of Anatole France's novels, the scholarly Jérôme Coignard, who, in his threadbare cassock, might have been met spending his last *sou* in The Little Bacchus tavern.

There is no uncertainty as to the location of another famous tavern of the seventeenth century, The Blackamoor, which was situated in the Rue de la Huchette, close to the left bank of the Seine. That this house was a formidable rival to The Pineapple is obvious from the remark of Théodore Agrippa d'Aubigné, the grandfather of Madame de Maintenon, who, in his lively "Adventures du Baron de Fænaste," implies that the two taverns were in keen competition with each other. The Blackamoor was unceasingly appearing in the drinking songs of the

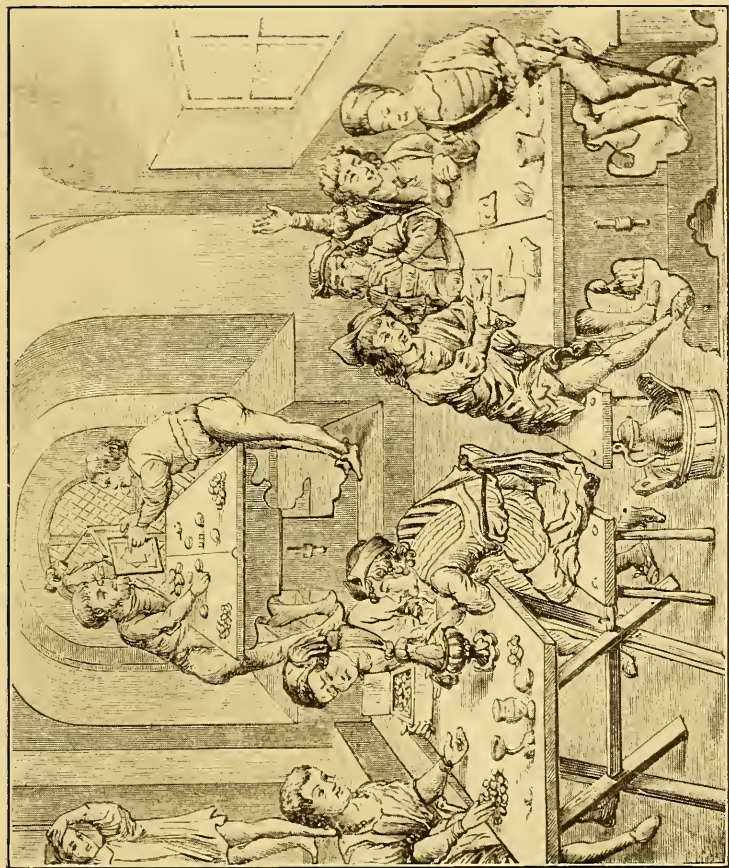
reign of Louis XIII, a sufficient proof that it was a favourite resort of the Bohemian poets.

*“ Sus allons chez la Coiffier,
Ou bien au Petit More.
Je vous veux tous défier
De M’enivrer encore ! ”*

Such an invitation and challenge is a testimony to the excellence of the liquor served at The Blackamoor, especially when taken in conjunction with this somewhat realistic picture of a drinking bout in that tavern :

*“ Un jour, Paulmier, à haute voix,
Enivré dans le Petit More,
Tandis qu’on le tenoit à trois,
Desgobillant, disoit encore:
‘ Je veux mourir, au cabaret,
Entre le blanc et le clairot ! ’ ”*

No laureate of The Blackamoor, however, was more profuse in his eulogies than the restless Theophile. In all the ups and downs of his adventurous life, and whether as a Huguenot or freethinker or Catholic, from the time when, in his twentieth year, he first tasted the freedom of Parisian life, and onward to the close of his stormy and libertine career, he remained a steadfast client of the house. Its table as well as its cellar was greatly to his taste. “ You must know, then,” he wrote, “ that one evening we met at The Blackamoor, which every toper



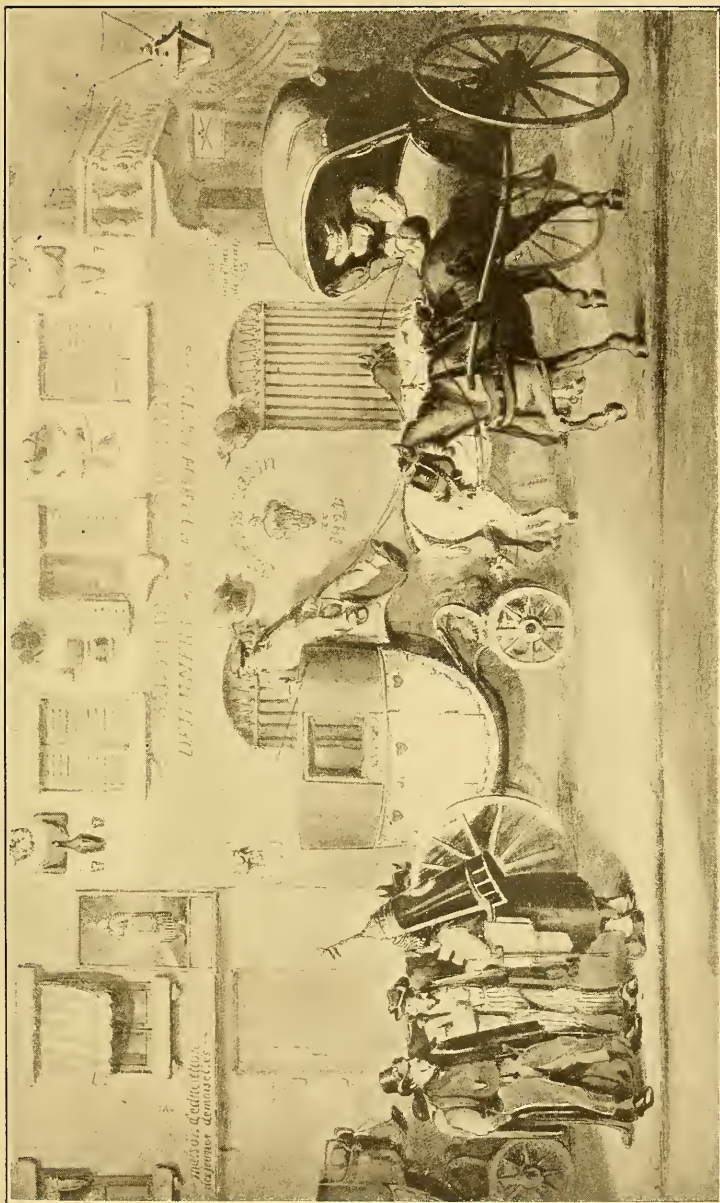
A STUDENTS' TAVERN IN THE LATIN QUARTER.

honours because of its good wine. We had a hash well seasoned with wine, followed by partridges and young rabbits." Here and there in his poems, too, he gives pen-pictures of his fellow frequenters of the tavern. One of those vignettes preserves the garb of a drunkard who frequently shared the poet's potations. "As to the hat he wears, it is such that one might describe it as a funnel. The cord which surrounds it is made *à la marane*, ornamented like the back of a donkey; his ear is like that of a pig." It must not be imagined, however, that the customers of The Blackamoor were drawn from the lowest ranks of the community; in the early seventeenth century it was frequented by the greatest lords of the day. The tariff, indeed, must have kept the place select, for, in 1607, the average cost of meat and drink was six crowns for each person, a sum probably equal to twenty-four dollars!

Although the Rue de la Huchette, in common with many other streets in that district of the Latin Quarter, retains its old-time aspect to a surprising extent, the identity of The Blackamoor has long been lost. Such is not the case, however, with The White Horse, an ancient inn on the Rue Mazet. To that venerable hostelry there is no better informed guide than Georges Cain, the accomplished curator of the Musée Carnavalet, whose enviable knowledge of Parisian topography has been displayed in many fascinating volumes. "Here," he writes of The

White Horse, “ in 1652, under Louis XIV, was the bureau of the Orleans and Blois coaches. Every morning, at six o’clock in summer, and ten in winter, the public conveyances which reached Orleans in two days (by way of Linas, Arpajon, Étampes and Toury), started from this vast courtyard, crowded with travellers, porters, friends and acquaintances, servant-women, parcels, packages and trunks. Amidst cracking of whips, blowing of horns, shouts and farewells and waving handkerchiefs the ponderous vehicle would get under way in a huge cloud of dust. Postilions swearing, dogs barking, women crying — here were concentrated the excitement of departure, the joy of returning, the pathos of farewell — a very microcosm of human life!

“ Now this life is fallen dead, but the surroundings are still the same, and are striking enough. The ancient inn falling to ruin, the old-fashioned courtyard where the grass grows between the stones, are just as they were in the days when d’Artagnan, as Dumas tells us in his happy way, alighted here (or would have alighted, if he had really lived), arriving from Meung on his yellow horse! It is now what it always was; stables and coach-houses are there still. A score or so of horses munch their hay, tied to the posts of pent-houses that date from the Grand Monarque, or under the smoke-begrimed beams sheltering the mangers of an olden time. Market carts are ranged in convenient corners,



A PARISIAN COACH OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

fowls peck at the rich manure heaps, lean cats bask in the sun beside the great iron-bound stone posts, chipped and battered by the thousands of knocks and shocks they have endured in the course of three hundred years!

“ From this courtyard, once so full of life and stir, travellers departed for long and distant journeys; the only destination you can book for nowadays is the Land of Dreams. Yes, it is one of the charms of Paris for lovers of the Past to find here and there such old corners as this, left almost intact amid modern improvements — spots where they can call up the visions of those olden times they love so well! ”

Strolling one day into this ancient courtyard of The White Horse in the company of Jules Massenet, the eminent composer, M. Cain overheard his friend murmur, “ It must have been here that Manon alighted from the diligence.” The reflection was natural in a man who thinks in operatic pictures, and the setting of M. Massenet’s “ Manon ” is probably indebted to this original. If the frail heroine of the Abbé Prévost’s romance never illumined the courtyard with her beauty, countless other country maidens as fair and frail as she have, without doubt, passed into the maelstrom of Parisian life through its battered archway.

Fiction and probability, however, give place to fact in the case of The Green Basket, an inn which,

although situated in the *Cité* not far from Notre Dame, belongs more to the history of the left than the right bank of the Seine. Its title to fame is that it was the scene of several exciting incidents in the early manhood years of Voltaire. Although he was doubtless familiar with more convivial resorts, for he was still little more than a youth when he became a member of the dissipated coterie of the Temple, it was at The Green Basket he slept and spent his working hours. Here, then, he made his headquarters when he returned from his exile to Sully, — a crisis in his career which was to have important results.

Louis XIV had been dead some eighteen months and the Duke of Orleans held the reins of government as regent. Shortly before Voltaire's return to Paris there had been published two biting satires on the state of the nation, entitled "*Les j'ai vu*" and "*Puero Regnante*," the authorship of which was attributed to the young poet. As, however, there were no facts upon which action could be taken, a spy of the government, Captain Beauregard by name, was detailed to interview Voltaire and learn what he could. On his first visit to The Green Basket the spy found his victim lounging on a sofa.

"Anything new?" he asked.

"A number of things," Beauregard answered, "have appeared against the Duke of Orleans and the Duchess of Berri."

“ Are any of them considered good? ”

Beauregard was diplomatic. “ There is thought to be much wit in them,” he said, “ and they are all laid to you. For my part, I do not believe it; it is impossible to write such things at your age.”

Voltaire, according to the spy’s report, fell into the trap. “ You are mistaken,” he remarked, “ in supposing that I am not the author of the works that have appeared during my absence. I sent all my things to M. le Blanc; and, to put the Duke of Orleans off the scent, I went into the country during the carnival, and stayed two months with M. de Caumartin, who saw those writings first; and afterwards I sent them to Paris. Since I cannot get my revenge upon the Duke of Orleans in a certain way, I will not spare him in my satires.”

“ Why,” asked Beauregard, as if with the interest of a friend, “ what has the Duke of Orleans done to you? ”

“ What! ” exclaimed Voltaire, leaping to his feet, “ You don’t know what that —— did to me? He exiled me because I let the public know that that Messallina of a daughter of his was — no better than she should be.”

After that outburst Beauregard left The Green Basket, well satisfied with the knowledge he had gained. On calling again the following day the spy took from his pocket in a casual way a copy of the “ Puero Regnante,” whereupon, so his story ran,

Voltaire said, "As to that, I wrote it at M. de Caumartin's, but a good while before I left." Two more days elapsed, and then Beauregard dropped in once more to expostulate with the young poet.

"How is this, my dear friend? You boast of having written the 'Puero Regnante,' and yet I have just heard, from very good authority, that it was written by a Jesuit professor."

"It is of no consequence to me," Voltaire rejoined impatiently, "whether you believe me or not. Those Jesuits are like the jays in the fable; they borrow the peacock's feathers with which to decorate themselves."

And so closed the third act of the little comedy which was enacted in The Green Basket in the spring of 1717. The fourth act and climax was not long delayed. Late the following morning, Voltaire, who had protracted his slumbers to an unconscionable hour, was aroused by the heavy footfalls of half a dozen men climbing the staircase leading to his room. And when he had recovered full consciousness and opened his eyes, it was to find these unexpected visitors surrounding his bed. One of the band, touching the poet on the shoulder with a white wand, handed him one of those pressing invitations to the hospitality of the Bastille which, under the name of *Lettres de Cachet*, played so large a part in the control of the turbulent spirits of the eighteenth century. As he could not be con-



VOLTAIRE.

veyed through the streets of Paris in his night-shirt, Voltaire was allowed to go to his dressing-room to prepare for his journey, and during his absence his papers were sealed and an inventory made of his belongings. Ere the proceedings terminated, the inquiring Beauregard came upon the scene in a casual way, still thirsting for information.

“ Why are you arrested? ” he asked Voltaire.

And when the poet rejoined that he knew nothing about it, Beauregard hazarded the guess that his writings were the cause.

“ There are no proofs,” Voltaire said, “ that I have written anything, for I have never confided my writings to any but true friends.”

Ignoring the implication, the spy asked whether there was nothing in the papers before them to convict him.

“ No,” replied Voltaire, “ for luckily the officer did not get hold of the pair of breeches in which there were some verses and songs. I took an opportunity, while I was dressing, to throw them where it won’t be easy to find them.”

A few minutes later the poet was on his way to the Bastille, and The Green Basket knew him no more. The inn had lost an excellent customer, but gained an association for the sake of which the host, had he been a man of discretion, might have been willing to bid farewell to half a dozen guests.

Some twenty years after The Green Basket had

acquired its one memorable link with the eighteenth-century literary history of Paris, a less pretentious hostelry in the Rue des Cordier, a short street connecting the Rue Victor Cousin with the Rue St. Jacques, was beginning to make reminiscent history on a more ample scale. This establishment, despite the fact that its accommodation was far from being of the highest class, arrogated the title of the Hôtel St. Quentin, an early example of the travesty of applying the designation of a noble's town mansion to an inferior lodging. No doubt its popularity with studious persons was accounted for partly by its adjacency to the Sorbonne, and, judging from the financial resources of its most notable guests, it may be taken as proved that the prices in force were not excessive. Perhaps the latter fact was the chief reason why the Hôtel St. Quentin, "a wretched hotel" in "a wretched street," enjoyed so large a clientele among the students and other learned persons of the Latin Quarter.

One of the earliest patrons of the house was Jean Baptiste Gresset, that singular poet who came to Paris in his sixteenth year. It was as a student he first lodged at the Hôtel St. Quentin, and it was to that house he returned in 1740, when he had already written that exquisite poem, "Vert Vert," by which he is best remembered. Sad, indeed, was the mood in which Gresset revisited the scenes of his student days. In revenge for the gentle satire of

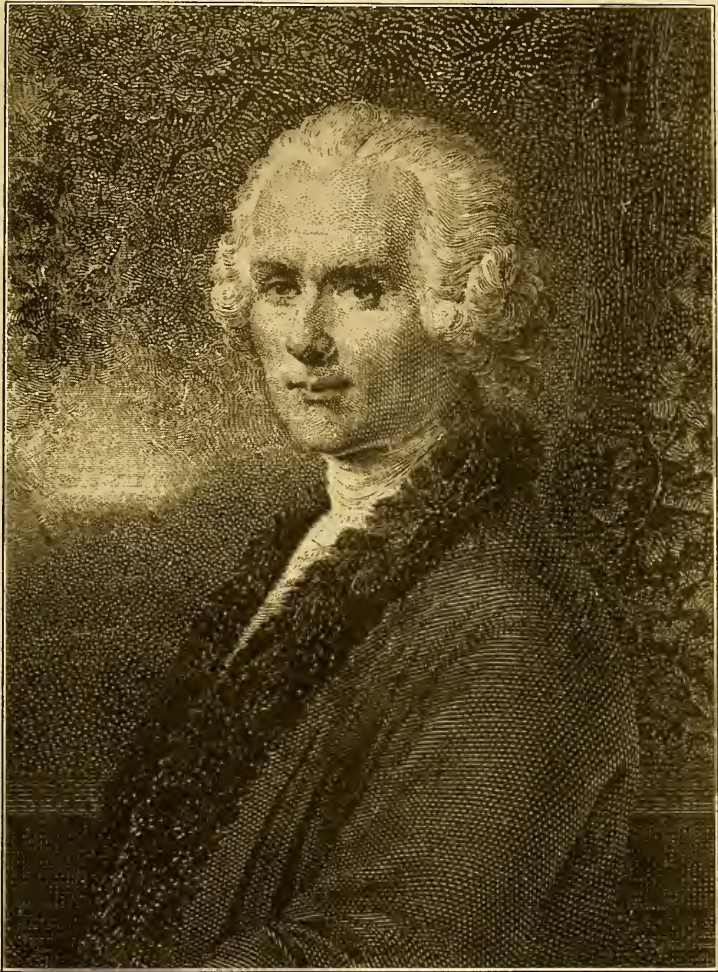
his poem, he had been expelled from the religious order of which he had been a member from his youth, and lacked the strength of mind to accept that degradation as a flattering tribute to his art. The holy fathers who engineered the expulsion may certainly be congratulated on the discernment which detected ridicule of their order under the smiling verses of "Vert Vert." The parrot hero of the bewitching tale was doubtless a formidable foe of monasticism. Reared in a convent, the bird's talk was compact of prayers and piety, but on being sent on a visit to another house of religion he made the acquaintance of profane swearers, and was so enamoured of the new language that on arriving at his destination he horrified his hostesses by remarks wholly unsuitable for religious ears. On being returned in disgrace, the sinner is punished in orthodox monastic fashion, and finally attains repentance and a saintly death. Such was the poem for which Gresset had been excommunicated and been obliged to once more seek his garret in the Hôtel St. Quentin.

Somewhere about the same period that roof also gave shelter to two remarkable brothers, the Abbés de Mably and de Condillac. The presence of the latter in so rude an hostelry may be accounted for by the fact that he was a philosopher; that of the former by his avowed antagonism to riches and luxury. Mably's simple tastes were no doubt greatly

admired by the publishers of his day, for a few copies of his books was all the royalty he would accept for works which greatly enriched the booksellers; his small income was, he said, sufficient for his wants. The low living of the Hôtel St. Quentin was not detrimental to high thinking, for he is credited with having foretold the French Revolution, and penned one book which kept for him the regard of American republicans until he wrote another on their constitution which they rewarded by burning its author in effigy as an enemy to toleration and liberty.

These three, however, — Gresset the poet, Condillac the philosopher, and Mably the political economist, — did not exhaust the Hôtel St. Quentin's title to fame. It had another client of far greater renown.

For, in the early summer of 1741, there arrived in Paris a young man bearing the name of Jean Jacques Rousseau, and destiny led his steps to the Hôtel St. Quentin. It may have been that he had learned the name of the hotel during his year's tutoring at Lyons, where he had been entrusted with the education of the children of Mably's elder brother; in any case, it was here, in "a wretched room" of that "wretched hotel" in a "wretched street," that the famous sentimentalist made his second experiment of life in Paris. Here, too, he remained for nearly two years, reconciled to his



JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU.

abode because of its associations with the three notables named above.

Besides it was cheap, and not far from the Luxembourg Gardens. These were important matters with Rousseau. His purse was somewhat flaccid, and his hopes of realizing fortune, if not fame, by his new method of musical notation were speedily dashed by the adverse report of the Academy. In these idle days the pleasant walks in the Luxembourg Gardens were an ideal retreat for a man who remembered the rural delights of Les Charmettes, and there, accordingly, Rousseau spent his mornings wandering to and fro while committing poetry to memory. His alternative afternoons were given up to the theatre and a café in which he played chess or watched some notable exponents of the game. Other leisure hours were spent in quest of patrons or patronesses, his pursuit of one of the latter taking that amorous turn which was characteristic of the man. But ever in the background of this aimless life lay that "wretched room" of the Hôtel St. Quentin.

Rousseau's faithfulness to that unattractive hostelry was to have issue in an event which coloured all his after-life. For, when he returned to Paris toward the end of 1744, from an absence in Venice of some eighteen months, he once more took up his quarters at the Hôtel St. Quentin. During the interval a new landlady had taken charge of the house,

a native of Orleans and a woman who “ pitched the conversation in merry Rabelaisian key.” Nor was that the only change. But Rousseau shall tell the story in his own words: “ To help her with the linen, she had a young girl from her native place, about twenty-two or twenty-three years of age. This girl, whose name was Theresa Le Vasseur, was of a respectable family, her father being an official at the Orleans mint, and her mother engaged in business. . . . The first time I saw this girl appear at table, I was struck by her modest behaviour, and, still more, by her lively and gentle looks, which, in my eyes, at that time appeared incomparable. . . . Our hostess herself had led an irregular life. I was the only person who spoke and behaved decently. They teased the girl, I took her part, and immediately their railleries were turned against me.”

While it was probably true that the other diners around the table of the Hôtel St. Quentin were “ people to whom graces of mien and refinement of speech had come neither by nature nor cultivation,” it is equally likely they had considerable excuse for their raillery. For, according to the best evidence, Theresa was not the modest and lively maiden of Rousseau’s fancy. She had no beauty save that created by her sentimental knight’s imagination, and the calibre of her brain may be judged from the fact that she could never be taught to read, could not remember the order of the months, and proved a

hopeless pupil in such a simple matter as mastering the hours of the clock. In short, as John Morley remarks, "Theresa Le Vasseur would probably have been happier if she had married a stout stable-boy, as indeed she did some thirty years hence by way of gathering up the fragments that were left." For those thirty years, however, she was the companion of Rousseau, and he affirmed that that companionship was the one consolation of his life. He, then, had good cause to remember the Hôtel St. Quentin.

About eighteen years after Rousseau had succumbed to the "modest" charms of Theresa, another sentimentalist, but of English birth, arrived in Paris to add to the literary associations of its inns. This was Laurence Sterne, whose "Sentimental Journey" preserves, it will be recalled, many lively pictures of life in the French capital.

Few of Sterne's biographers have concerned themselves much with identifying the house in which he stayed when he arrived in Paris at the beginning of 1762. And that reverend humourist, while careful to note the street where he had his encounter with Madame R.'s *fille de chambre*, and to indicate many another locality of his piquant adventures, merely gives the name of his hostelry as the Hôtel de Modène. That was not a fictitious name. It appears, indeed, in a brief list of the "most agreeable and most frequented" hotels of the Faubourg St. Ger-

main made by a visitor in 1715, and the list affords the information that it was situated in the Rue Jacob. That fits in exactly with the topographical directions of Madame R.'s attractive maid. And it adds another Shandean interest to the Rue Jacob, for it was in that street also Sterne was for a time the guest of Madame Rambouillet.

That Sterne had promised himself a gay time in Paris is a safe inference from the nature of the man. But the first hours of realization were not promising. "I own my first sensations," he confessed, "as soon as I was left solitary and alone in my own chamber in the hotel, were far from being so flattering as I had prefigured them. I walked up gravely to the window in my dusty black coat, and looking through the glass saw all the world in yellow, blue, and green, running at the ring of pleasure. Alas, poor Yorick! cried I, what art thou doing here? On the very first onset of all this glittering clatter thou art reduced to an atom — seek — seek some winding alley, with a tourniquet at the end of it, where chariot never rolled or flambeau shot its rays — there thou mayest solace thy soul in converse sweet with some kind *grisset* of a barber's wife, and get into such coteries! — "

But here the reverend adventurer pulled himself up short. He would go and present a letter of introduction. So his valet was despatched in search of a barber and bidden return with all speed to brush

his master's clothes. The barber, however, was so long a-coming and so slow in his operations that by the time Sterne was ready to sally forth the hour for formal calls had gone. After all, then, he was driven back on his original programme, and, for a stranger, his luck was phenomenal. To bring down in one expedition two such birds as the lively glove-maker, with her willingness to have her pulse felt, and Madame R.'s dainty little maid, with her confiding ways, was fortune indeed. Certainly Sterne had no reason to complain of Parisian hospitality.

When, however, he reached the Hôtel de Modène once more his valet La Fleur had alarming news to communicate. The lieutenant of police had called to make inquiries about the new English arrival. And hardly had he announced that momentous fact than the master of the hotel appeared upon the scene to express his hope that his guest had provided himself with a passport. Sterne had not. To make matters worse, in the eyes of his host, he did not even know any one in Paris who could procure him such a document. The hotel-keeper was really alarmed, more probably at the prospect of losing his guest's money than for any harm that might betide his person; but Sterne was in too jaunty a mood to be distressed; to the assurance that he would be in the Bastille on the morrow, he rejoined, " But I've taken your lodgings for a month, and I'll not quit

them a day before the time for all the kings of France in the world."

That was not the only animated interview Sterne had with the host of the Hôtel de Modène. Although no purist in morals, mine host was a stickler for the perquisites of his profession. Hence his horror on learning that Sterne had had a two hours' interview in his room with Madame R.'s alluring little maid, and his speedy recovery on learning that the visitor was neither a lace seller nor had Sterne purchased any of her wares. That made all the difference. Otherwise "the credit of the hotel," etc., etc. He would not have minded "twenty girls" in the morning, provided, of course, they carried band-boxes filled, or not, with lace. Twenty, Sterne replied, with a deprecation of which he might not have been suspected, were a score more than he reckoned upon. And so hostilities were abandoned, and he stayed his month at least at the Hôtel de Modène.

But Mrs. Sterne, absent in England, knew nothing of these lively proceedings. They were stored up for the pages of the "Sentimental Journey." In his letters home the amorous sentimentalist confined himself to such safe topics as the gossip of his barber, the pulpit oratory of a famous preacher, his party engagements, and — unfailing theme of the Briton — the weather. As an afterthought he reported his progress in French; "I speak it fast and fluent, but incorrect in accent and phrase." Yet it

is evident neither his faulty quantities nor blundering idioms interfered seriously with his temporary bachelorhood at the hotel on the Rue Jacob.

Sterne was still in France, though not in Paris, when another of his compatriots took up his abode in a hotel of the Faubourg St. Germain. As became a writer who was scrupulously careful to verify his references, Edward Gibbon — for that was the new arrival — enlightened his correspondents as to the exact details of his address. In informing his father that he had received one of his letters twelve days after its date owing to somebody's negligence, he added: “ My direction is, *à Monsieur Gibbon, Gentilhomme Anglois, à l'Hôtel de Londres, rue de Columbier, Faubourg St. Germain, à Paris.*” The Hôtel London does not appear on the list which defines the locality of Sterne's hostelry, but it mentions another, the “ large Hôtel de Lurgnes,” as being situated in the same street.

Unlike that “ Passing Pilgrim ” of the previous chapter, who changed his quarters so frequently, Gibbon's first choice appears to have been so fortunate that he had no desire to move. In the latter half of the eighteenth century the Faubourg St. Germain was still the chief residential centre of the French nobility, and it may be assumed that the Hôtel London was in harmony with the select amenity of the neighbourhood. “ You see,” Gibbon wrote his father, “ I am still in that part of the

town; and indeed from all the intelligence I could collect, I saw no reason to change, either on account of cheapness or pleasantness." Not that the tariff of the Hôtel London was on the moderate scale of Rousseau's "wretched" abode; Gibbon's "cheapness" must be interpreted in a comparative sense, for he no sooner wrote the word than he added that Paris was "unavoidably a very dear place;" what he wished to impress upon his father, who was paying his expenses, evidently was that for his son the Hôtel London was as reasonable a place as he could find.

When Gibbon took up his abode at the Hôtel London in January, 1763, there to remain for fourteen weeks, he was in his twenty-sixth year and already an author. Not, of course, of the "Decline and Fall;" that was a project which was to be attempted later; but of the "Essay or the Study of Literature," which, written in French, had been "little read and speedily forgotten" in England, but had been received with marked favour in Paris. In addition to that auspicious circumstance, Gibbon bore with him to the French capital many letters of introduction, of which not a few were written by the graceful pen of Horace Walpole. These circumstances, apart from the difference in the natures of the men, will explain why Gibbon was neither reduced to the grisette-hunting expedients of Sterne nor guilty of suspicious interviews in his bed-room

at the Hôtel London. When he set out from that hostelry in the morning, conscious that his English clothes looked "very foreign," it was to roam here and there through Paris in search of churches and palaces, libraries and picture galleries; while his afternoon and evening calls had for their objective the enjoyment of the society of a "polished and amiable people." At the end of a month his experiences had answered his most sanguine expectations. "The buildings of every kind, the libraries, the public diversions, take up a great part of my time; and I have already found several houses, where it is both very easy and very agreeable to be acquainted."

In addition to his topographical expeditions and social engagements, Gibbon found time to prosecute his studies in his apartments at the Hôtel London, for he pays a grateful tribute to the librarians who allowed him the use of their books in his own rooms. In one letter he describes how those rooms were "hung with damask," and gives a gorgeous glimpse of the state in which he made his journeys abroad in a coach behind which were "two footmen in handsome liveries." Strangely enough, these details have been overlooked by most of the historian's biographers, who speak of him as the guest of the Neckers, ignoring his explicit statement that he did not "lodge in their house." Hence it is not the mansion on the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin but the

Hôtel London which must be held in remembrance as Gibbon's Parisian home.

Nothing untoward happened to disturb the peace of the historian's sojourn. He was thirty years too soon. He did, it is true, meet some of the men, such as Diderot, who were the heralds of convulsion; but some three decades were to elapse ere their revolutionary teaching reached its climax in the Reign of Terror. Something of the sinister shadow of that time clouded the visit to Paris of one of Gibbon's fellow countrymen, Dr. John Moore, who arrived in the city early in the fateful month of August, 1792, and put up at the Hôtel de Muscovie in the Faubourg St. Germain. This was one of the most fashionable hostelries of the day, much affected not only by wealthy Russians but also by English nobles. And, thanks to the diary of Dr. Moore, it is possible to gain some idea of how the stirring days of the French Revolution affected the guests of such establishments.

During the first few days of that memorable August the patrons of the Hôtel Russia were little disturbed by the momentous doings which were happening in Paris. But on the ninth day there came a change. The climax was drawing near. In the National Assembly discussion waxed ever more bitter; in the various districts of the city the discontented were on the eve of open rebellion. When Dr. Moore returned to his hotel late that night he

found all the guests seething with excitement. About midnight, too, the usual quiet of the hotel was broken by the beating of drums and repeated cheering in the adjacent streets. The landlord explained that orders had been given to all citizens to illuminate their windows; that an attack on the king's palace was anticipated; and that the National Guards were standing to arms at all dangerous posts. Dr. Moore, however, went to bed as usual, only to be awakened about two o'clock by the clanging of bells, and to learn, from other guests who had been sitting up all night, that the masses were assembling for the purpose of marching to the Tuileries. Once again Dr. Moore sought his couch, to be thoroughly aroused several hours later by the unmistakable booming of cannon and impassioned shouts of, "To arms, citizens, to arms!"

What followed on that sanguinary day is written in the annals of the French Revolution. But how the steadfast faithfulness of the Swiss Guards, and the hatred which their loyalty aroused, affected the hostelry life of Paris is illustrated by what happened late that day at the Hôtel Russia. As was the usual custom in those days, a board fixed on the gate of the hotel bore the inscription, "Parlez au Suisse" and the porter at the gate was spoken of as "the Swiss" no matter what his nationality might be; but ere the Tenth of August passed into history the board at the Hôtel Russia was repainted, "Parlez

au Portier," and the man in charge of the gate implored Dr. Moore and all other returning guests to speak of him in future as "the Porter" and not as "the Swiss." Those were anxious times for the landlord, too, as he had to take his share of guard duty and assist in the search for suspected persons.

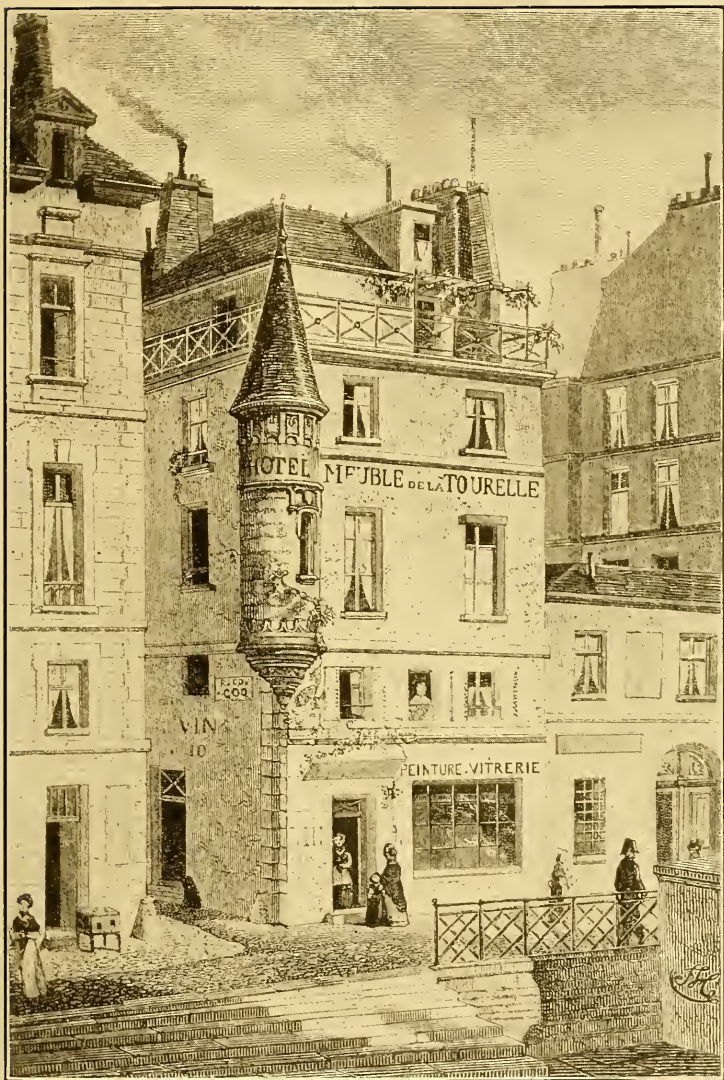
In fact, for some years to come, the events of the French Revolution coloured the life of many of the inns and taverns of Paris. One illustration is afforded by The Golden Cup, an inn at the corner of the Rue de Varenne, of which Georges Cain writes: "In the Rue de Varenne alone, each portal awakes a remembrance of the most illustrious names of France's nobility: Broglie, Bourbon, Condé, Ville-roy, Castries, Rohan-Chabot, Tessé, Béthune-Sully, Rougé, Montmorency, Ségna, Aubeterre, Narbonne-Pelet, etc., and some of the hosts of these aristocratic dwellings were certainly found disguised, dressed up as horse-dealers, drovers, peasants, workmen, in The Golden Cup hostelry, which was celebrated in the history of the Chouannerie. The heroes of 'Tournebat,' my dear friend Lenôtre's interesting work, put up there, says the author, who, himself filled with enthusiasm, knows how to inspire his reader with the same. It was one of the meeting-places used by the sworn companions of Georges Cadoudal, who hid there several times; and there, too, the royalist conspirators met to complete, for

Vendémiaire, Anno IV, their arrangements relative to the abduction of the Convention.”

Less directly, perhaps, but none the less surely was the Revolution responsible for the historic association of The King Clovis, a tavern on the Rue Clovis, which was the meeting-place of the conspiracy of the Four Sergeants of Rochelle. It was while the leader of that band, François Bories, was stationed in Paris that he was initiated into the ranks of the Charbonniers, and agreed to secure recruits in his own regiment. He proved a faithful and zealous member of the fraternity which aimed to overthrow the Bourbon monarchy, and in the end he, and his three comrades, paid the usual penalty. Although the scene of their chief activity was at La Rochelle, it was in The King Clovis in Paris that Bories received those halves of cards by which he was to identify other members of the society.

And it was another spreading wave of the same revolutionary influence which for a day brought into prominence a tavern overlooking the Place St. Jacques. Of all the many attempts on the life of Louis Philippe, whose pose as “ Citizen King ” was no protection against the designs of discontented individuals, that of Fieschi, with its elaborate infernal machine, was the most horrible. The king escaped, but eighteen spectators were killed. Largely for that reason, the public execution of the murderer on the Place St. Jacques attracted an enormous con-

course of onlookers, conspicuous among whom was the deposed Duke of Brunswick, who watched the grim scene from a window of the tavern aforesaid. Attired in "a fashionable great-coat of olive green, and frequently waving about a beautiful Indian silk handkerchief," he was also observed to have provided himself with "a spying-glass" the better to follow the events on the scaffold below. Perhaps the Duke was anxious to learn the etiquette of such an occasion in the event of his being called upon to be the chief figure in such a ceremony. For his appearance at the tavern window overlooking the Place St. Jacques coincided with a homicidal episode in his own inglorious career. Enamoured of an actress, and having discovered that a convenient spot in which to indulge his passion was behind the scenes while his charmer was attired in a minimum of clothing, he was enjoying a tender embrace when a stage-hand, who had been bribed to carry out the joke, rang up the curtain and disclosed the couple to the audience. The actress fainted, but the duke whipped out his sword and laid the joker dead upon the stage. And yet, by some means or other, he was able to avoid becoming a spectacle for some other occupant of that tavern window on the Place St. Jacques.



THE TURRET HOTEL.

CHAPTER III

INNS AND TAVERNS OF THE RIGHT BANK

STUDENT life was the most important factor in giving colour to the history of the inns and taverns on the left bank of the Seine. With a few natural exceptions, those hostelries live in the annals of old Paris because they were the haunts of Bohemians, a feature which was to be still more conspicuous when cafés came into fashion. The inns and taverns on the right bank of the river, however, gathered associations of another kind. Some, it is true, shine by the reflected glory of literary genius, but in the mass their claim to remembrance is based upon their connection with assassination and political strife.

Even that tavern of many memories which, as a tablet records, once stood at the corner of the Rue de l'Arbre-Sec on the Rue de Rivoli, first emerged into history as a scene of bloodshed. For it was in that mansion, then known as the Hôtel de Ponthieu, that the first victim of the massacre of St. Bartholomew lost his life. On the dawn of that memorable August day of 1572, in an upper room, Admiral Coligny lay in a fitful slumber. The leader of the Huguenots had ignored the warning of a captain who said he was leaving Paris because "they

show us too many kindnesses here; I had rather escape with the fools, than perish with such as are over-wise." Coligny had, indeed, given no heed to the attempt already made on his life — an attempt which had resulted in the fevered wounds that had disturbed his sleep. And now the end had come. There was no mistaking the meaning of the noise of battered doors and the heavy tread of armed men. In a few minutes the ruthless emissaries of the murderous Duke of Guise and the fiendish Catherine de Medici burst into the room of the aged and wounded Coligny and despatched him with many sword thrusts. The bleeding body was at once thrown down into the courtyard, there to be beheaded and then dragged forth into the streets as a sign that the "holy work" was well begun.

Many years later, in 1744, the room which had witnessed that cold-blooded murder was the scene of the birth of the famous comédienne, Sophie Arnauld. By that date the mansion had fallen upon evil days, for it had become a tavern of somewhat dubious repute, of which Sophie's father was the keeper. When that tavern-born child became the "Queen of the Opera" and won the favour not only of all Paris but also the enthusiastic admiration of such critics as David Garrick, her birthplace became a shrine for admiring pilgrims. Many, doubtless, also recalled its associations with Coligny; with Rancé, whose mistress, the Duchess of Montbazou.

once resided under its roof; and with the artist, C. Van Loo, who used one of its rooms as a studio.

Through the assassin's knife, too, another building became suddenly notorious in the first decade of the seventeenth century. This time, however, it was not a noble's mansion which had nefarious fame thrust upon it, but a lowly inn known as The Three Pigeons. For so had destiny ordered it that it was in that hostelry François Ravailac found a home while he awaited the opportunity to join the ranks of the regicides.

Chequered indeed, but mostly by ill fortune, had been his thirty-two years. Born in lowly circumstances at Angoulême, he tried many ways of earning a living, now as a gentleman's servant, anon as a lawyer, and finally as a school-teacher. He failed in all, and when debt drove him to despair he sought admission into a religious order, for there was a strong strain of fanaticism in his ill-balanced nature. Such was Ravailac when he arrived in the capital in the spring of 1610.

Paris was in a festal mood. As Henry IV was on the eve of starting for a warlike expedition, he had consented to the crowning of his Queen, the better to establish her authority as regent during his absence. The celebration of that ceremony had naturally attracted great crowds of visitors and the inns and hotels were full to overflowing. And gossip, largely misinformed, was busy with the king's

approaching departure and its purpose; even soldiers were overheard declaring that it was against the Pope war was to be waged for the purpose of transferring the Holy See to the French capital. Both these circumstances affected Ravailiac. The idle tales of the soldiers kindled his fanaticism into a flame; the demand on the hospitality of the hosteleries made it difficult to find shelter. At several inns his application for accommodation elicited the rejoinder of "no room," and it was in one of these that, as he turned to leave, his eyes fell on a large pointed knife with a stag-horn handle. The knife fascinated him; it was just the weapon with which to slay a king who was contemplating war on the Holy Father; so he slipped it into his pocket and went out to resume his search for a lodging. At last, at The Three Pigeons, he was successful. It was situated opposite to the church of Saint Roch, in a countrified lane which was long since transformed into the Rue St. Honoré, and there Ravailiac made his home until his purpose was achieved.

Day by day for nearly three weeks he left The Three Pigeons each morning to take up a patient vigil near the Louvre, and for as many nights he returned thither with his desire unfulfilled. Either Henry IV issued not from his palace, or, when he did, was too closely guarded. But at last there dawned a day in May when the monarch, depressed and ill at ease, was advised by his physician to seek

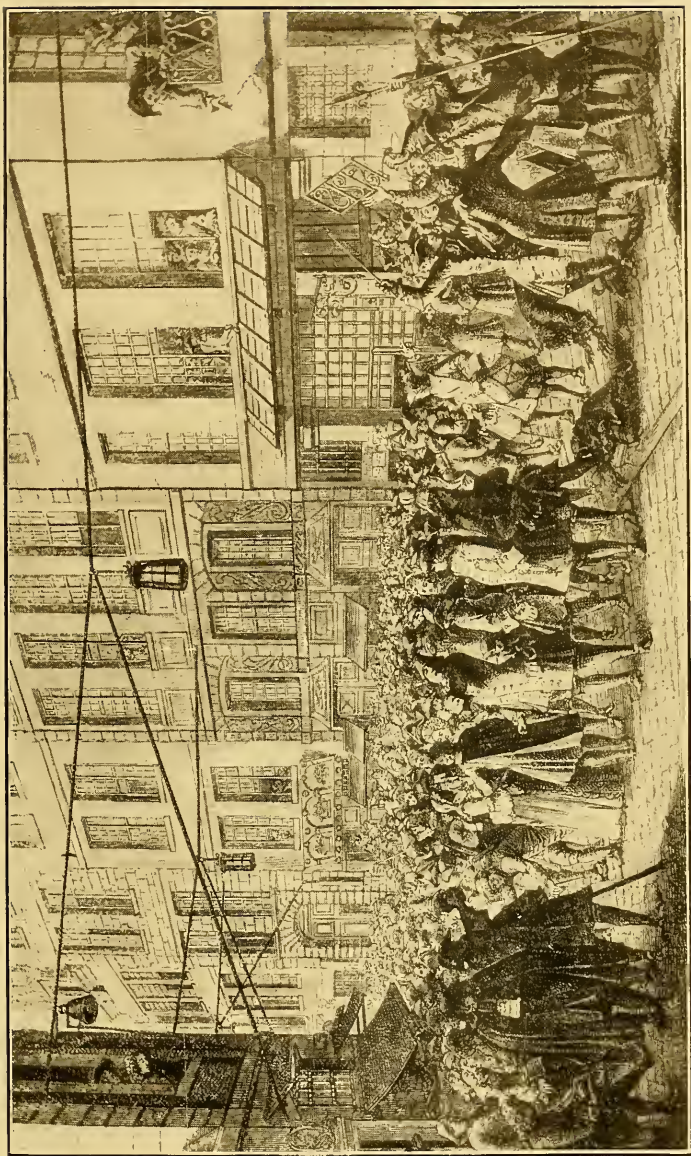
relaxation in a drive. Acting on the suggestion, the king ordered his coach and, with but a small retinue, set out on a visit to a sick minister. Ere the little cavalcade had proceeded far, a block in one of the narrow streets of the city brought it to a halt. The watchful Ravailiac had followed, and hardly had the royal coach been brought to a standstill than he sprang forward and plunged his knife twice into Henry's body.

That night there was a guest missing from The Three Pigeons. Seized red-handed, Ravailiac was soon within prison walls, whence two weeks later he issued to pay the penalty of his crime by barbarous execution. "Sad and deathlike" in his countenance, "naked in his shirt," with his murderous knife chained to one hand and a lighted torch in the other, he passed in a dung-cart through execrating crowds to his scaffold of torture and death. Nor was the fiendish justice of those days placated when the assassin had been seared with red-hot pincers, scalded with molten lead, and torn apart by horses chained to his arms and legs; his father and mother were banished from France, all his kindred commanded to renounce the name of Ravailiac for ever, and the house in which he was born given to the flames. The marvel is that that consuming vengeance spared The Three Pigeons.

Not that the wanderer in Paris must expect to find that hostelry to-day. There are, it is true, some

old buildings along the Rue St. Honoré, but The Three Pigeons has long disappeared. If, however, the curious pilgrim would gaze upon such ancient inns or drinking-shops as will enable him to realize the type of house in which Ravaiillac lodged he cannot do better than explore the old narrow streets in the neighbourhood of the church of St. Merry. One of these, the Rue de Venise, is as ancient a thoroughfare as is to be found in all Paris, and at the corner of the Rue Quincampoix is a building, now a low wine-shop, which as The Wooden Sword was in its day greatly in favour with musicians and Racine, Boileau, and Marivaux. This district, too, is memorable in the annals of old Paris as the scene of John Law's famous Mississippi Scheme, one of those early get-rich-quick speculations which in 1720 excited all classes of the community and made the Rue Quincampoix for weeks the centre of reckless gambling. The rents of the houses in the street soared from two hundred dollars a year to four thousand dollars a month, and a poor hunchback whose deformity provided a convenient writing-desk for brokers netted by a few days' use of his person in that novel manner a comfortable fortune of thirty thousand dollars.

Of course The Wooden Sword shared in this mushroom fortune. Broking and speculating were thirst-creating occupations, and the tavern-keeper reaped a rich harvest where to-day his successor is content



SCENE OUTSIDE THE WOODEN SWORD.

to serve low-priced absinthe over his zinc counter. But The Wooden Sword also acquired in those days of mad gambling an association of crime, for it was in this tavern that, aided by two libertine friends, the young Count Horn brutally murdered a man who was reputed to have won fabulous wealth through his speculations.

If, to vary these memories of bloodshed, the wanderer would for the moment make the acquaintance of another inn of old Paris distinguished only for its association with orderly industrial life, he may gratify his wish in the Rue Montorgueil, where he will find that Golden Compass Inn which was the headquarters of country carriers for many generations before and after the bursting of the Mississippi bubble. "Its double entrance, blocked up with small butchers', tripe-dealers', and poulterers' stalls, opens on a huge yard, where fowls peck on heaps of golden dung, where ducks quack, and goats bleat under the eyes of some thirty horses, peaceful tenants of the ground floor, with their inquisitive heads thrust over the half-doors, through the low windows or open air holes. At the back, beneath the spacious shed, the carriages and carts are put up 'midst a healthy country smell of verdure and hay; and it really is a curious sight to see such a silent nook, with its farmyard, at the back of the noisy, populous, crowded street, full of workmen, pedlers, and shouts or cries of bubbling life and movement."

Another tavern of the mid-eighteenth century, The Basket of Flowers, revives for the right bank of the Seine those literary memories which make up so much of the history of the left-bank hostelries. The story is told by Rousseau in his "Confessions" and relates to himself, Diderot, and Condillac, one of his companions, it will be remembered, at the Hôtel St. Quentin. "As we," he wrote, referring to some period between 1745 and 1747, "lived at a great distance from one another, we all three met once a week at the Palais Royal, and dined together at The Basket of Flowers. These little weekly dinners must have been exceedingly agreeable to Diderot, for he, who nearly always failed to keep his other appointments, never missed one of them. On these occasions I drew up the plan of a periodical, to be called *Le Persifleur*, to be written by Diderot and myself alternatively. I sketched the outlines of the first number, and in this manner became acquainted with D'Alembert, to whom Diderot had spoken of it. However, unforeseen events stopped the way, and the project fell into abeyance." This was about the time when Diderot was busy with hack-work for the booksellers and not long before he began his memorable task as the chief of the encyclopædists.

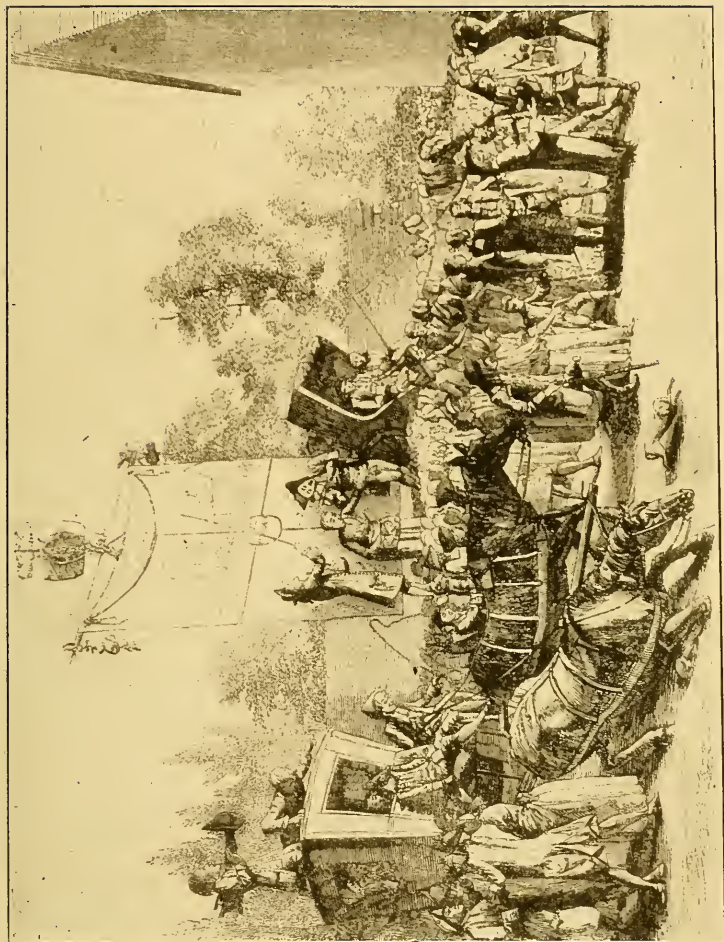
While Diderot and his colleagues were, by their pens, preparing the way for the French Revolution, their labours were being forwarded by Louis XV

and the libertines of his court. Following the licentious example of the Regent, the king devoted all his energies to sensual or low-class pleasures. Some of the less guilty of his excesses keep alive the memory of a tavern which was the most famous example of its class. This type of hostelry was known as a *guinguette*, and was to be found in greatest abundance in the suburbs or just outside the gates of the city. Many were little more than tents, but occasionally the tent and garden were adjuncts of a tavern of the usual kind. As Paul Lacroix has reminded us, the *guinguettes* outside Paris were the most frequented, and were equipped with arbours, hidden in verdure, standing in a garden or shrubbery. Hence their other name of *Courtilles*. The most celebrated of these places was The Royal Drummer, kept by Ramponeau at the Courtille des Porcherons.

Of this tavern-keeper, the most popular in his day, Victor Fournel wrote that "his sense of humour, his witty remarks, his good-tempered, fat face, his Silenus-like neck, and the gorgeous signboard upon which he was represented astride a hogshead, contributed, not less than the reputation of his cellar, to make his tavern a favourite resort of choice spirits. All Paris went to see his establishment, and brilliant equipages might be seen at his door. The great people went there, just as they went to the markets and the Quai de Gesvres, to hear in all its

native beauty the slang which the works of Vadé had made fashionable, and to which the younger scions of the nobility had become accustomed during their dances with the young women who sold fish and butter at the markets." Ramponeau owed the vogue of his tavern to the king himself, who often went thither in a disguise which did not conceal his identity. To take part in the " candle-end balls " of such a resort afforded a new pleasure to the jaded taste of Louis XV, and the ribaldry heard there, the suggestive slang, the obscene wit furnished a new variety of conversation for those light-hearted courtiers who had been taught to abominate the grand style of the previous reign. So much was Ramponeau the rage that his name was given to sauces or clothes or furniture; those who did not possess something *à la Ramponeau* were regarded with scorn in high society. And the fashion continued unabated until the eve of the Revolution, for Marie-Antoinette frequently visited The Royal Drummer and declared that she had never enjoyed herself more than at a wild farandole which was the climax of an entertainment at that delectable resort.

Meantime, and while Ramponeau was still at the height of his fame, in another district of Paris, the Faubourg St. Antoine, an industrious brewer, Antoine Joseph Santerre by name, was quietly brewing his beer and tending his Hortensia Tavern on the



RAMPONEAU'S TAVERN.

Rue de Reuilly, unconscious that to him would fall the reaping of some of the harvest being sown so light-heartedly by the aristocratic patrons of The Royal Drummer.

That tavern-house of "the sonorous Santerre" may still be seen on the Rue de Reuilly, little changed, save that it is no longer the Hortensia Tavern but an educational "establishment for young ladies." It is worthy of note for the sake of a man of more unsullied fame than Santerre, for the stout old Samuel Johnson visited the place during his Paris trip and held converse with the brewer as to the price he paid for his malt and the number of barrels he filled every year. Fourteen years later the keeper of the Hortensia Tavern had other interests than those of malt and beer; as the result of his revolutionary leadership among the discontented inhabitants of his district he was made a major of the National Guard, and from that time onward he took a prominent position among the men who created the Revolution. History shows him conspicuous at the storming of the Bastille, and as leading the people of his faubourg in the assault on the Tuileries. Nay, he became a general, "General Hops" and "the frothy General" as the wits called him, and when the food supplies of Paris ran low he distinguished himself by suggesting that the Parisians should "rid themselves of useless pets." The city, he said, contained sufficient cats and dogs to eat up

daily the nutriment of fifteen hundred men. Caricatures and satires were the only result of the appeal. One journalist at once calculated the number of sparrows in the city, found they reached the amazing total of over ten millions, and called upon "General Hops" to order their immediate destruction. But he of the "loud voice and timber head" was unmoved; "my whole strength," he roared, "is, day and night, at the service of my fellow-citizens; if they find me worthless, they will dismiss me; I will return, and brew beer." And it was thither the paths of glory eventually led him — back to his brewery and the Hortensia Tavern. But it was too late; by his military neglect brewery and tavern had lost all their clients; and "General Hops" ended his career in poverty.

Yet there is little doubt he hugely enjoyed his brief authority. In a time when most people had to be content with the plain title of "citizen" it was a distinction indeed to be called "General" even though he was really nothing more than a tavern-keeper.

One resplendent occasion, when he was an important guest of honour, no doubt lingered in his memory until death, as it also probably did in the recollection of other participants. For among what may be called the social events of the French Revolution, as distinguished from those events which imprinted an indelible stain on human nature, one of the most

notable was that Sunday banquet which was held at White's Hotel in November, 1792, in celebration of the victories of the soldiers of the Republic.

According to a newspaper account, this Sunday feast at White's Hotel was "intended to be purely British" but got out of hand to such an extent that it became international. The diners included Prussians, Austrians, Italians, Americans, and Hollanders in addition to the British organizers and the French guests, while the overflowing rooms were "decorated with civic and military trophies," and several bands enlivened the proceedings with martial or revolutionary airs. The heroes of the evening were Santerre and two of his comrades in arms, Generals Bruyere and Dillon, but in the retrospect it is equally interesting to note that the British contingent included John H. Stone, Robert Merry, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and Thomas Paine. The first seems to have been the moving spirit of the "joyful occasion;" he was a political refugee who had already passed through some exciting adventures and had many more in store. Merry was something of a poet and had sung the praises of the Revolution in the "Laurel of Liberty," a service to "the cause" unknown to or ignored by the crowd which had chased him through Paris with the cry of "A la lanterne!" Fitzgerald was an Irish pupil of Rousseau, hot of blood and generous in his sympathies, and was marked for a violent death. That

Rights-of-Man Paine should have been of the company was most natural of all.

Given such hosts and guests the character of the toast-list may be easily divined. "The Republic of France," drunk to trumpets and "Ça Ira, Ça Ira;" "The Armies of France," to the martial strains of "The Marseillaise;" "Perpetual Union between the free people," to the song, "Oh Homme, mon frère;" and many another sentiment of kindred spirit. The enthusiasm reached its height when Sir Robert Smith and Lord Edward Fitzgerald solemnly "renounced" their titles and pledged the toast of "The abolition of hereditary titles in England," an after-dinner indiscretion which resulted in the social ostracism of the former and the end of the army career of the latter.

Out of that high-spirited festival at White's Hotel arose one of those magniloquent addresses and replies which were characteristic of the French Revolution. Before the orators or orations had grown incoherent it was "ordered by acclamation" that an address be presented to the National Convention. That document, inscribed to the "citizen legislators," set forth that "nations, enlightened by your example, blush at having bowed for so long a period their servile heads under a yoke degrading to human nature." The reply of the President of the Convention did not fail of being equal to the occasion. "Royalty in Europe," he declaimed, "is

either destroyed, or on the point of perishing on the ruins of feudalism, and the declaration of rights, placed by the side of thrones, is a devouring fire which will consume them."

Who that reads of that Sunday banquet in the time-stained newspaper of November, 1793, would imagine the September massacres were but two months old? The quaint old print is so calm-looking; the toasts and speeches and songs, "Oh Homme, mon frère!" have such a spirit of inexhaustible brotherhood.

But all was not quite so well in that best of Republics as the vinous orators at White's Hotel pretended. Elsewhere in France, and notably at Caen in distant Normandy, were some who were sadly convinced that the millennium was not yet. And out of that conviction was soon to be shaped a deed which was to give another hostelry of Paris an association in lurid contrast to the festal memory of White's Hotel.

While, then, in Paris there were enthusiasts of all nations ready with their eulogy of the "enlightened example" of France, in the Norman town where William the Conqueror was buried a young woman named Charlotte Corday was harbouring quite different thoughts. Imbued with those ideals of civic virtue and stoical heroism of which she had made the acquaintance in the pages of Plutarch, and inspired by that text of the Apocrypha which told

how "the Lord made choice of Judith to deliver Israel," that fair young Norman, beautiful in form and countenance, put from her all thoughts of love and wedded happiness and dedicated her life to a purpose worthy of Roman fortitude. Her soul had been moved to horror at the crimes perpetrated in the name of liberty, and her hatred of the cruelty of the Revolution centred specially in the person of the bloodthirsty Marat. Keeping, then, her resolve secret in her own bosom, she, on the specious plea of taking refuge in England, bade her aunt good-bye, left a note of farewell for her father, and mounted the diligence for Paris. Even in the coach an opportunity came to embrace that life of domestic peace most native to her sex, for a fellow passenger fell captive to her beauty and made her an earnest offer of marriage; but Charlotte Corday had left a lover behind in Caen and in his person had taken her final-farewell of wifely destiny.

Her coach journey ended in the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Victoires Nationales, and there she hired a man to take her to the hostelry of which she had the address. The card bore this inscription: "Madame Grollier, Tient l'Hôtel de la Providence, Rue des Vieux-Augustins, No. 19, près la Place de la Victoire-National. On y trouve des appartements meublés à tous prix. À Paris." Her wants were soon supplied from those "furnished apartments at all prices," and while the servant was putting her



CHARLOTTE CORDAY.

room in order she plied him with questions as to the condition of affairs in Paris. What, she asked, did the citizens think of Marat? Very highly, said the waiter, "but he has been ill for some time now, and seldom appears in the Convention."

This was on Thursday; the next day Charlotte Corday had a visitor at the hotel; and on Saturday morning she went out and found her way to the Palais Royal where, for forty sous, she purchased a long sharp-pointed knife with an ebony handle. On one of these days, in the quietness of her room at the hotel, she wrote that "Address to the French People" which was to be her apologia, and then penned and dispatched to Marat a letter asking him for an interview in the interests of the "service of France." Following the letter in person, she was repulsed from Marat's door on the plea that he was too ill to see any one.

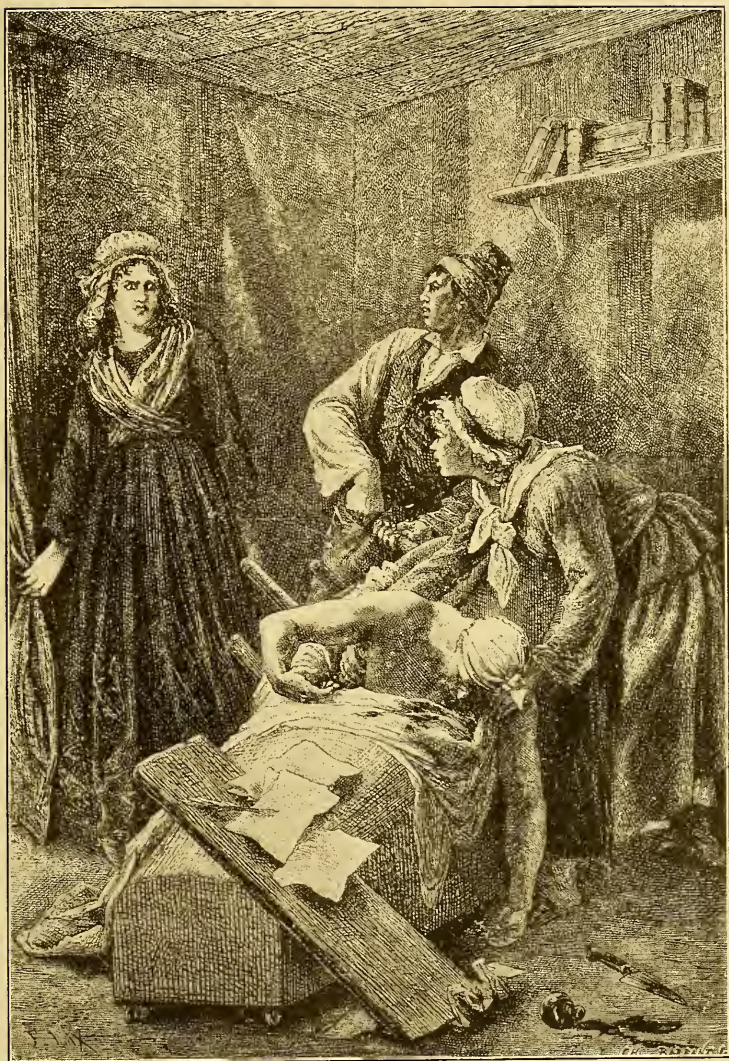
Nothing daunted by that rebuff, Charlotte Corday, late in the evening of July 13th, 1793, dressed herself for the last time in her room at the Hôtel de la Providence, covering herself with a brown cloak and finishing her toilette with a high-crowned hat adorned with a black cockade. On reaching Marat's squalid house no plea that he was ill sufficed to turn her from his door, and at last, above the altercation in the passage, the voice of Marat was heard ordering the visitor to be allowed in. The Friend of the People, already a doomed victim from the loathsome

skin disease from which he was suffering, sat half upright and almost naked in the warm bath from which alone he could derive some relief, and across the bath lay a board with writing materials.

Brief was the interview between that strangely-contrasted couple. A question from Marat as to the condition of things in Caen; a reply that eighteen deputies were planning a rising; a "what are their names?" from Marat; and then, as he wrote them down and threatened "their heads shall fall within a fortnight," the fair visitor drew forth her knife and plunged it with unerring aim into the side of her victim. With one despairing cry, Marat fell back in his bath dead.

And now the maiden from Caen had no more need of her room in the Hôtel de la Providence; she had accomplished her mission and went cheerfully to that prison and scaffold of which she had counted the cost. She had no statue, to be inscribed "Greater than Brutus," as her last-hour admirer suggested, and even the hostelry which gave her shelter until she had achieved her heroic purpose was some years ago pulled down to provide space for a new public building. For many years, however, that high house with its iron balconies was an object of deep interest, and especially that room, looking out on the street, which Charlotte Corday so willingly exchanged for the condemned cell of a prison.

Nothing is more in keeping with the history of



DEATH OF MARAT.



the inns and taverns and hotels of the right bank of the Seine than that it was from a window of one of the latter, the Royal Hotel on the Rue St. Honoré, the first shot was fired in the Revolution of July.

No monarch either so richly deserved to lose his crown or lost it so speedily as Charles X. His obtuseness is one of the mysteries of royal history. Such ordinances as those by which he attempted to "save the face" of his defeated minister would have roused the most phlegmatic of subjects, much less the volatile Parisians. The abrogation of the freedom of the press was bad enough, but to dissolve a newly-elected chamber before it had met and lay down fresh conditions for the election of its successor awoke more than journalists and printers to the realization of the king's desire to revive the old despotism. The rebellion, then, spread with startling rapidity. To the thirty thousand newspaper men and printers whose loss of occupation gave them freedom to roam the streets and shout vengeance against the government, there were quickly added many more thousands of workers whose employers had turned them adrift with the object of adding to the difficulties of the king and his ministers.

Hence the tumultuous mobs which packed the streets of Paris on the 27th of July. The crowd was specially dense in that Rue St. Honoré where once stood Ravailac's inn of The Three Pigeons, and it

was in that thoroughfare the first blood of the Three Days' Revolution was shed. The immediate cause was the effort made by a small detachment of guards to enter the Rue St. Honoré by a small side street, an effort in which the soldiers were so closely pressed upon and pelted with all kinds of missiles that for a time they were unable to advance or retire. It was at this juncture a fowling-piece was discharged at the guards from the windows of the Royal Hotel. One story credits an American with that reckless act; it seems more probable, however, that the culprit was an Englishman named Foulkes, neither the first nor the last representative of those busybodies of his nation who have so often exploited themselves in Paris in times of political upheaval."

That unprovoked fusillade, however, met condign punishment. The officer in charge of the guards, startled by an attack for which his men had given no cause, ordered his men to fire, and the volley they directed at the hotel window whence they had been attacked put an effectual end to Mr. Foulkes' ambition to pose as a revolutionary leader. That quick Nemesis was thoroughly deserved, for but for that inexcusable shot the July Revolution might have been effected without bloodshed.

Whether Louis-Philippe, whom that Revolution placed on the throne of France, agreed with the enthusiasts who characterized it as "glorious" may be gravely doubted. In the course of his brief reign

he had good reason to realize the truth of that historian who said that the soil of France was "sown with assassins." And one of those assassins blamed that same "glorious Revolution" for his conversion into a parricide. This was Louis Aliband, another maker of unenviable history for the inns of Paris.

When, after his attempt by a cane-gun on the life of the king, his past career was unearthed with that thorough attention to biographical detail of which an example was set in the case of Ravailac, it was discovered that he was the son of a tavern-keeper, and that prior to his assault on Louis-Philippe his chief home had been in a poor hostelry on the Rue de Valois Batave. The evidence of the hotel-keeper and his porter showed that Aliband was a youth of idle and dissolute habits; that he did not usually leave his bed until noon, and then went out to frequent low-class cafés until past midnight; and that he was in debt for a considerable sum to the landlord and porter alike. Now and again he would spend hours in his room writing; if he talked at all the usual burden of his conversation was his own misery and determination to commit suicide. Despite his protestation at his trial that he had no pretensions to be placed on the list of famous regicides, his failure in life, his wandering habits, and his deed and its punishment place him and his hostelry notoriety in the same category as Ravailac.

Here, however, an end may be made of chronicling the history of such inns and taverns as perpetuate the basest traits of human nature; it will be a relief to revive the memory of a hostelry which, although it illustrates the meanness of that nature in one respect, in another is flattering to humanity.

Somewhere, then, about the year 1836 a Parisian named Tonny was master of a hostelry on the Rue Louis-le-Grand known as the Hôtel Britannique. Perhaps M. Tonny had chosen that title on the springes-to-catch-woodcocks principle; at any rate, either the designation or some other desirable quality attracted to M. Tonny's establishment a guest of the name of Douglas. He promised to be a valuable patron, for, as he explained, he required accommodation not only for himself but also for his wife and five children, to say nothing of the family retinue of five servants. There was one little matter, however, in which Mr. Douglas felt sure he could rely upon M. Tonny for temporary adjustment. He and his family and retinue had, he explained, been residing at another hotel in Paris where the charges, when pay-day came round, were found to be exorbitant. Indeed, the bill was so considerable that, pending the receipt of money from England, he was not able to meet it. If, however, M. Tonny would meet that bill for him he, Mr. Douglas, was prepared to transfer his entire establishment to the Hôtel Britannique.

Evidently this was M. Tonny's first introduction to the canny Scot, or it may be that Mr. Douglas put his case in such an engaging manner that the master of the Hôtel Britannique thought it would be folly to turn away such a large addition to his guest-list. Whatever may have been the deciding cause, M. Tonny assumed the responsibility for the Douglas debt, and the whole clan, plus the five servants, came over to the Hôtel Britannique.

For several weeks all went well, but when at length a considerable payment became due, Mr. Douglas suddenly disappeared. It is true he was considerate enough to send M. Tonny a letter explaining his absence, and that allayed the suspicions of the kindly hotel-keeper until, shortly after, Mrs. Douglas was also missing. Ten of the party were left, the five children and as many servants, and these were so closely watched and were so lacking in funds that they had no opportunity to emulate the example of the heads of the household. The months went by and at length several years elapsed, and still M. Tonny's only security for the Douglas debt consisted of the ten mouths and ten bodies which were daily adding to the total by the consumption of food and the occupancy of beds.

At length, however, tender parental longings appear to have been awakened in the hearts of the absconding father and mother, and they appealed to M. Tonny for the release of their offspring and

their servants. M. Tonny replied that he would be delighted to grant the request on receipt of the twenty thousand francs now due to him. But the parental affection of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas was not equal to such a severe financial strain, and so they put the law in motion to test whether a hotel-keeper was within his rights in detaining much-loved children and faithful servants as a security for filthy lucre. The Paris tribunal decided he was not. The president of the court did warmly compliment M. Tonny on his "honourable" behaviour, but assured him the law did not sanction the detention of the children and servants even in so desirable a prison as the Hôtel Britannique. True, the court also reserved to M. Tonny his claim upon the Douglas parents, but that was about as realizable as Villon's snows of yester-year.

All this happened about the time Emerson paid his first visit to Paris, and it would have been pleasant to learn that he had given his patronage to so deserving a man as M. Tonny. The sage of Concord, however, does not seem to have been aware of the existence of the Hôtel Britannique; or, if he were, he elected by preference the Hôtel Montmorenci on the Boulevard Montmartre, finally changing his quarters to a pension. He was not particularly happy in Paris, though he felt that if he had friends in the city he might have derived some enjoyment from the life of the cafés and restaurants. As it

was, "I was sorry," he wrote, "to find that in leaving Italy I had left for ever that air of antiquity and history which her towns possess, and in coming hither had come to a loud, New York of a place."

Had Emerson delayed his visit a few years he might have profited by the gentle satire which Thackeray was to provide in his "Paris Sketch Book" — satire which takes one back to the experience of those two Dutchmen who made the usual mistake of herding with their own countrymen. Thackeray's advice to strangers gives an early account of a hostelry which, reconstructed and modernized, still exists on the Rue de Rivoli. "If you are a stranger in Paris," he wrote, "listen to the words of Titmarsh. If you cannot speak a syllable of French, and love English comfort, clean rooms, breakfasts, and waiters; if you would have plentiful dinners, and are not particular (as how should you be?) concerning wine; if, in this foreign country, you *will* have your English companions, your porter, your friend, and your brandy and water — do not listen to any of these commissioner fellows, but with your best English accent shout out boldly, 'Meurice!' and straightway a man will step forward to conduct you to the Rue de Rivoli."

Not all the patrons of the Hôtel Meurice in the mid-nineteenth century were of that insular British type described so scornfully by Thackeray. An exception should be made in favour of John Ruskin

and his dog Wisie. The latter, a sagacious white Spitz, had been given to Ruskin in Venice, and kept him company there in St. Mark's Place, looking out, from a window ledge, on the manners and customs of the city. One of Wisie's subsequent adventures enriched the Hôtel Meurice with an association which will appeal to all lovers of dogs.

“Reaching Paris,” Ruskin wrote, “he considered it incumbent upon him to appear unconscious of the existence of that city or of the Tuileries gardens and Rue Rivoli, since they were not St. Mark's Place; — but, half asleep one evening, on a sofa in the entresol at Meurice's and hearing a bark in the street which sounded Venetian, — sprang through the window in expectation of finding himself on the usual ledge — and fell fifteen feet to the pavement. As I ran down, I met him rushing up the hotel stairs (he had gathered himself from the stones in an instant,) bleeding and giddy; he staggered round two or three times, and fell helpless to the floor. I don't know if young ladies' dogs faint, really, when they are hurt. He, Wisie, did not faint, nor even moan, but he could not stir, except in cramped starts and shivers. I sent for what veterinary help was within reach, and heard that the dog might recover, if he could be kept quiet for a day or two in a dog-hospital. But my omnibus was at the door — for the London train. In the very turn and niche of time I heard that Macdonald

of St. Martin's was in the hotel, and would take charge of Wisie for the time necessary. The poor little speechless, luckless, wistfully gazing doggie was tenderly put in a pretty basket (going to be taken where? thinks the beating heart,) looks at his master to read what he can in the sad face — can make out nothing; is hurried out of the inexorable door, downstairs; finds himself more nearly dead next day, and among strangers. (*Two miles* away from Meurice's, along the Boulevard, it was.)

“ He takes and keeps counsel with himself on that matter. Drinks and eats what is given, gratefully; swallows his medicine obediently; stretches his limbs from time to time. There was only a wicket-gate, he saw, between the Boulevard and him. Silently, in the early dawn of the fourth or fifth day — I think — he leaped it, and along two miles of Parisian Boulevard came back to Meurice's. I do not believe there was ever a more wonderful piece of instinct certified. For Macdonald received him, in astonishment, — and Wisie trusted Macdonald to bring him to his lost master again.”

Another association of the Hôtel Meurice links that establishment with the romantic story of a left-handed queen of the Second Empire. In the days of his exile in England Louis Napoleon made the acquaintance of Eliza Howard, who was perhaps the most famous courtesan of her time, a woman of exquisite figure and head and features comparable to

a masterpiece of Greek sculpture. So great was her attachment to the aspirant to the throne of France that to aid him in the prosecution of his schemes she placed at his disposal the vast wealth she had amassed in her profession, and when Louis Napoleon returned to Paris in 1848 she followed him and took up her quarters at the Hôtel Meurice. At that time Miss Howard entertained the ambition of becoming actual queen of France, and when that hope was destroyed through Napoleon falling a victim to the charms of Mlle. de Montijo, her fury was terrible. "Sire," she wrote to her former lover, "I could readily have sacrificed myself to a political necessity. But I cannot pardon you for immolating me to a caprice." Although the Emperor purchased her silence by the gift of a million dollars and a title, she could not resist annoying the Empress by driving in the Bois de Boulogne in an open carriage with servants in the imperial livery.

But inasmuch as at the beginning of this chapter it was stated that some of the inns and taverns of the right bank of the Seine are notable for their connection with that political strife which has always entered so largely into the life of Paris, it is time to turn to the Hôtel of the Senate, which still stands in the Rue de Tournon. In its outward aspect it has been greatly improved since Alphonse Daudet described its courtyard as "black and damp," and the windows in its dining-room as

“cloudy;” but its chief glory still is that it can yet show the room in which Léon Gambetta lived when he was laying the foundation of his future fame as the dictator of France.

Even in those early years, “round-backed, blind of one eye, and inflamed of face” though he was, his was the most pervading presence among the Gascon guests of the hotel. Daudet knew him then and has left on record a vivid picture of his appearance in the dining-room of the Hôtel of the Senate.

“As soon as he entered, the other horse-heads sprang up around the table and greeted him with a formidable neigh:

“‘Ha! ha! ha! here’s Gambetta!’

“They pronounced it, the monsters, *Ghambet-thâh*, and a mouthful it was!

“He, sitting noisily down, spread himself over the table, or threw himself back in his chair, perorated, rapped with his fist, laughed till the windows shook, dragged the table-cloth about him, spat to a distance, got drunk without drinking, snatched the dishes from your hands, the words from your mouth, and, after having talked the whole time, went away without having said a single thing; Gaudissart and Gazonal in one; that is to say, all that can be imagined most provincial, most sonorous, and most tiresome. I remember that once I invited to our table a little employé of the city, a cold lad, very self-contained, who had just made his début in

the Charivari, signing the name of Henri Rochefort to theatre articles in a prose as sober and reserved as his own person. Gambetta, to do honours to the journalist, seated him on his right, the side of his sound eye, and soaked him all the evening with his eloquence, so well and so long that the future chairman of the Committee of Barricades carried away from our dinner a stupendous headache which cut short our relations."

From the same chronicler we learn that not all the literary Bohemian interest of Paris is confined to the Latin Quarter. Even the Brasseries, which are nothing more than taverns under a more pretentious name, can boast their associations with the sons of genius. There was "The Brasserie," for example, that tavern on the Rue des Martyrs which arrogated to itself the definite article as though it were the one and supreme haunt of its kind, and where "Murger reigned absolute at the middle table, the Homer and Columbus of this little world." But he was not the only notable who frequented that resort; through the clouds of smoke Daudet caught sight of Pierre Dupont, "old already at forty-five, fat and stooping," and with a voice burnt away by alcohol to a hoarse rattle; and Gustave Mathieu, with his Henry IV air and a wild flower in his buttonhole; and Fernand Desnoyers, "with the braggart airs of a corsair;" and Charles Baudelaire, "tormented in art by a thirst for the undis-

coverable, in philosophy by the alluring terror of the unknown." There was, too, the table of the thinkers, men who neither said anything nor wrote, but only thought; and, in another corner, the artists and sculptors crowded together; while models, faded and fresh, had their own nook elsewhere.

But "The Brasserie" did not enjoy that monopoly which its name suggested. On the testimony of Albert D. Vandam, that "Englishman in Paris" who, as future pages will show, was the industrious Boswell of the convivial resorts of the French capital, the Brasserie L'Espérance on the Faubourg St. Denis could compete with its rival on the Rue des Martyrs in literary association at least. This tavern was the favourite resort of Émile Erckmann and Louis G. C. A. Chatrian, the novelists who in their collaboration were so self-sacrificing of identity that their books might have been the work of one personality. Year in and out one table was reserved for the two friends, Erckmann of lank build and swarthy complexion, Chatrian short and fat and florid. When Vandam first saw the two at the L'Espérance they had already published several volumes, none of which, however, had made the least sensation. In fact, so apathetic was the reading public that one evening when the depressed pair were joined by a friend, Erckmann was overheard to declare that the best thing he and his colleague could do would be to drown themselves. Their

friend, who was also their publisher, seemed to regard the idea as an inspiration. "If you carried out that resolve," he said, "it might cause a sensation, and I should be sure of getting rid of the whole of the stock." But Erckmann and Chatrian lived to write "*Le Conscrit de 1813*" and henceforward had no need to think of suicide as a means to the selling of their books.

As will appear in succeeding chapters, it is the cafés of Paris which are richest in literary legends, but it must not be forgotten that in addition to the hostelries of Bohemian fame already mentioned, there are others not even situated in the Latin Quarter which have their memories of wayward genius. Many artists have sought relief from disappointed hope or themes for new canvases with which to tempt fickle fame in the cabarets which have so largely taken the place of the less reputable inns and taverns of olden days. Such a haunt was that cabaret on the Boulevard de Clichy where Édouard Manet discerned the subject of his "*Servante de bocks*," a type of those waitresses of picturesque pose and easy gait who can manipulate many glasses of beer without spilling the contents of any. Of more poignant memory are those squalid taverns of Les Halles, in one of which that ill-balanced genius, Gérard de Nerval, added some pages to his weird "*Le Rêve et la Vie*" on the night before his pitiful suicide.

Nor should the underworld of Parisian tavern life be forgotten, especially such defiled haunts of vice as the Tavern of Père Lunette or The Cellar or The Angel Gabriel. They have many features in common,—the huge zinc counter, the obscene prints and inscriptions on the walls, the long and spacious wooden bench on which the toppers may repose while recovering from their potations, the rows of casks of beer, and, above all, the motley clients, men and women of pallid or evil mien fresh from a prison cell or on their way thither. Such resorts are, however, gradually being demolished, a regeneration of old Paris not to be regretted even by the most ardent lover of the past.

CHAPTER IV

CAFÉS OF THE LEFT BANK

ALTHOUGH the café of modern Paris might, in many cases, be more truthfully designated a restaurant, it must not be forgotten that its progenitor in old Paris was faithful to its name as indicating a house where coffee was sold ready for drinking.

To recall those early days when the café was a café is to revive the vexed problem of the first discovery of coffee and its introduction into Europe. In the absence of definite information as to how it came to pass that some man at some time in some land first realized the seductive use to which the berry of the coffee-tree could be put, many fanciful stories have been invented, the most picturesque being that legend which credits the prior of a monastery in Arabia with observing how frisky goats became after they had fed on the coffee-berry and arguing that his indolent monks might be rendered a little more brisk if they partook of the same diet. Perhaps, however, this is an extreme case of reasoning from an effect back to a cause.

What seems fairly well established is that the first European to mention coffee was Rauwolf, the German botanist, who made a journey to the Levant

in 1573. Another early reference is found in the travel book of George Sandys, the poet who gave a start to classical scholarship in America by translating Ovid's "Metamorphoses" during his pioneer days in Virginia. He was already a considerable traveller, for, in 1610, he spent a year in Turkey, Egypt and Palestine, and in his narrative of those wanderings he recorded that although the Turks were destitute of taverns, "yet have they coffa-houses, which something resemble them. There sit they, chatting most of the day, and sip of a drink called coffa (of the berry that it is made of), in little *China* dishes, as hot as they can suffer it; black as soot and tasting not much unlike it, which helpeth, as they say, digestion and procureth alacrity." To the same effect is the statement of Olearius, who entertained his readers with a lively account of the coffee-houses of Persia, which were frequented by poets and historians who indulged in lengthy speeches and satirical tales.

Sandys made no effort to introduce to his fellow countrymen that "black as soot" drink; his verdict of "tasting not much unlike it" proves that it did not appeal to his palate; and he had been in his grave almost a decade before the drink was introduced to London. It was later still before Paris made its acquaintance, for in the rivalry between the two cities as to which first became a coffee-drinking community there is no question that the

French capital must take second place. It should be sufficient distinction for the Parisian that although he took to coffee later than the Londoner he speedily outstripped him in the art of making it to perfection.

Of course it was a traveller, Jean de Thévenot by name, who first drank coffee in Paris. During his wanderings in the Levant he not only learned the useful qualities of the beverage but fell captive to its flavour, and when he returned to Paris he carried with him a supply of the berry. This was in 1657, five years later than the opening of the first coffee-house in London, but Thévenot did not succeed in making any converts to the drink among Parisians. Something more spectacular than his methods was required to establish the "outlandish drink" in the favour of his fellow countrymen. A dozen years later that want was supplied. In 1669 there arrived in the French capital Soliman Aga, an ambassador from the Sultan of Turkey, and he brought with him not merely sufficient coffee for his own needs but a supply ample for presentation purposes. And Soliman Aga had also provided himself with the stage properties which were to succeed where Thévenot had failed. The elegance of the manner in which the drink was prepared "recommended it to the eye, and charmed the women: the brilliant porcelain cups in which it was poured; the napkins fringed with gold, and the Turkish slaves on their knees

presenting it to the ladies, seated on the ground on cushions, turned the heads of the Parisian dames." These embellishments would have been sufficient to commend a liquor less attractive in look and taste than coffee; they were adequate at any rate to make the beverage a theme of fashionable gossip, and time would do the rest.

When, then, an Armenian named Pascal set up a coffee-house as an attraction of the Fair of St. Germain, in 1672, it seemed probable that his enterprise would be speedily rewarded. Pascal was, however, just a little too soon, or did not realize the kind of patronage for which it was necessary to cater at that juncture. His coffee-house was little more than a not very high-class tavern in which beer was also sold and smoking allowed. It was not, indeed, the kind of place likely to be frequented by the devotees of the new drink. Hence the first café of Paris proved a failure, and it was not until a Florentine named François Procope appeared upon the scene that the prejudice created by Pascal's premature effort was overcome. Taking warning by the example of his predecessor, Procope fitted up his café in a superior style, and in 1689 the refined Parisian was able to sample the new drink amid environment of the most irreproachable character.

From that hour the future of the café in Paris was assured. The Parisian was waiting for it with-

out being quite conscious of the fact. For many generations the inn or tavern had served his social purpose; but when he began, as Walpole said, to live "in perpetual opera," to imagine himself young when he was old, he had need of a different public stage. And that the café gave him. The most friendly observer cannot ignore the fact that the consuming ambition of the Parisian is to pose. "To *poser* is the Frenchman's chief delight. He prefers it even to dawdling on the Boulevards, or making epigrams, or to saying some profoundly witty or sarcastic thing which will make his genial brethren hail him as a second Voltaire." And nowhere can he strike an attitude with more effect than in the café.

In less than a century, then, after the Café Procope had opened its doors, there were six or seven hundred similar establishments in Paris. And that was all to the good of the city's social life. "I think I may safely assert," said a writer of the late eighteenth century, "that it is to the establishment of so many cafés in Paris that is due the urbanity and mildness discernible upon most faces. Before they existed, nearly everybody passed his time at the cabaret, where even business matters were discussed. Since their establishment, people assemble there to hear what is going on, drinking and playing only in moderation, and the consequence is, that they are more civil and polite, at least in appear-

ance.” That philosophical reflection was often made in praise of coffee. It had already been eulogized as a “wakeful and civil drink,” and its usurpation of the place of ale, beer, and wine welcomed in the interests of industry and sobriety.

For the most lively and at the same time mildly satirical pictures of the earliest cafés of Paris we must turn to the “Persian Letters” of Montesquieu. By the pen of two Persians on a visit to Paris he gives now a general picture of a café and anon several character sketches of the men who frequented those haunts, and it should be remembered that Montesquieu wrote in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Even then, however, he was able to report that coffee was much used in Paris, and that there were a great many public houses where it was sold. “In some of these houses,” he added, “they talk of news, in others they play draughts. There is one where they prepare the coffee in such a manner that it inspires the drinkers of it with wit; at least, of all those who frequent it, there is not one person in four who does not think he has more wit after he has entered that house. But what offends me in these wits is, that they do not make themselves useful to their country, and that they trifle away their talents on childish things. For instance, at my arrival in Paris, I found them very warm about the most trifling controversy imaginable; they were disputing about the

character of an old Greek poet, of whose country, and the time of his death, they have been ignorant these two thousand years. Both parties allowed he was an excellent poet; the question was only whether he had more or less merit than he deserved. Each was for settling the value, but amidst these distributors of reputation some made better weight than others; such was the quarrel." Could Montesquieu have revisited Paris more than two centuries later he would have discovered that the precise degree of the genius of Homer was still a matter of warm debate in at least one of the cafés of the city.

Literary quibblers, however, were not the only patrons of those early cafés. Montesquieu also tells of the geometrician whom he met on the Pont-Neuf and accompanied to a certain coffee-house. "I observed that our geometrician was received there with the utmost officiousness, and that the coffee-house boys paid him much more respect than two musqueters, who were in a corner of the room. As for him, he seemed as if he thought himself in an agreeable place; for he unwrinkled his brows a little, and laughed, as if he had not the least tincture of the geometrician in him. In the meantime he measured everything that was said in conversation. He resembled a person in a garden, who with a sword cuts off all the heads of the flowers that rise above the rest. A martyr to regularity, he was of-

fended at every start of wit, as a tender eye is by too strong a light. Nothing was indifferent to him, if so be it were true; accordingly his conversation was singular. He was come that day out of the country, with a person who had been to view a noble seat and magnificent gardens; but he saw nothing but a building of sixty feet in front, by five and thirty in depth, and a wood of ten acres; he wished that the rules of perspective had been observed, that the walks of the avenues might have appeared throughout of one and the same breadth: and he would have laid down for that end, an infallible method." All his talk was in the same vein: a report of a battle set him off describing the curves taken by the bombs; the mention of an inundation reminded him that he had foretold a flood.

\ If other cafés were spared the infliction of such a calculating bore, they were not deficient in singular characters. Thus Montesquieu has left us the portrait of that discontented mortal who bemoaned that while he had a fortune of fifteen thousand livres a year in land he had nothing in money. He lamented his sorrows aloud in a café, and it was in the same café another complained that while he possessed two hundred thousand livres in bank-notes he had not an acre of land to call his own. These were not the only human curiosities in the café; "Happening to turn my head," Montesquieu remarks, "I saw a man who made such grimaces, that one would have

thought him possessed. ‘Who can we trust for the future,’ exclaimed he. ‘There is a villain whom I had so good an opinion of, and thought so sincerely my friend, that I lent him money: he paid me again! what black perfidy and ingratitude is this? Let him do what he will, he will never be able to retrieve my good opinion.’ . . . At last I saw an old man enter, pale and thin, whom I knew to be a coffee-house politician before he sat down: he was not one of those who are never to be intimidated by disasters, but always prophesy of victories and success: he was one of those timorous wretches who are always boding ill. ‘Our affairs,’ said he, ‘are in a very bad situation in Spain, we have no horse upon the frontiers; and it is to be feared that the prince Pio, who has a considerable body, will levy contributions upon the whole province of Languedoc.’ There sat opposite to me a philosopher of a tolerably shabby appearance, who seemed to dispise the politician, and shrugged his shoulders in token of contempt, whilst the other raised his tone of voice. I approached him, and he whispered in my ear, ‘You see how that coxcomb talks of his apprehensions for Languedoc; and I for my part yesterday perceived a spot in the sun, which, if it should increase, might cause a general dissolution of nature, and yet I did not say a single word about it.’” Obviously the type of café frequenter was fixed many years ago.

François Procope, however, is usually credited with having had a much more limited constituency in view. As the date of the opening of his café harmonized with the opening of the Comédie-Française it has been supposed that his primary object was to cater for the actors of that theatre. The fact that they were both situated in the same street — then the Rue des Fossés-St.-Germain but now the Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie — and opposite each other, seems to lend support to that theory. But to limit Procope's ambition in that way is to give him little credit as a man of business, for he probably knew that the histrionic fraternity was then, as now, usually short of funds.

And yet it was the fate of the Café Procope to become associated in a notable manner with the history of the French stage in the eighteenth century. If the actors of the Comédie-Française did not bulk largely among the patrons of the house, the dramatists did. There was Voltaire, for example, whose anxiety to know what the theatre-goers thought of his "Sémiramis" enriched the Café Procope with one of its most picturesque memories. That tragedy, a futile effort to compete with Crébillon *père*, who had been spurred to rivalry by the notorious Madame de Pompadour, was produced at the Comédie-Française in 1748 and much debated in the café across the street.

Hence the following pen-portrait of the dramatist

by the hand of a friend. “ M. de Voltaire, who always loved to correct his works, and perfect them, became desirous to learn, more especially and at first hand, what good or ill the public were saying of his Tragedy; and it appeared to him that he could nowhere learn it better than in the Café de Procope, which was also called the Antre (Cavern) de Procope, because it was very dark even in full day, and ill-lighted in the evenings; and because you often saw there a set of lank, sallow poets, who had somewhat the air of apparitions. In this café, which fronts the Comédie-Française, had been held, for more than sixty years, the tribunal of those self-called Aristarchs, who fancied they could pass sentence without appeal, on plays, authors and actors. M. de Voltaire wished to compear there, but in disguise and altogether incognito. It was on coming out from the playhouse that the judges usually proceeded thither, to open what they called their great sessions. On the second night of ‘ Sémiramis ’ he borrowed a clergyman’s clothes; dressed himself in cassock and long cloak; black stockings, girdle, bands, breviary itself; nothing was forgotten. He clapped on a large peruke, unpowdered, very ill combed, which covered more than half of his cheeks, and left nothing to be seen but the end of a long nose. The peruke was surmounted by a large three-cornered hat, corners half bruised-in. In this equipment, then, the author of

‘ Sémiramis ’ proceeded on foot to the Café de Procope, where he squatted himself in a corner; and waiting for the end of the play, called for a *bavaroise*, a small roll of bread, and the *Gazette*. It was not long till those familiars of the Parterre and tenants of the café stepped in. They instantly began discussing the new Tragedy. Its partisans and its adversaries pleaded their cause with warmth; each giving his reasons. Impartial persons also spoke their sentiments; and repeated some fine verses of the piece. During all this time, M. de Voltaire, with spectacles on nose, head stooping over the *Gazette* which he pretended to be reading, was listening to the debate; profiting by reasonable observations, suffering much to hear very absurd ones and not answer them, which irritated him. Thus, during an hour and a half, had he the courage and patience to hear ‘ Sémiramis ’ talked of and babbled of, without speaking a word. At last, all these pretended judges of the fame of authors having gone their ways, without converting one another, M. de Voltaire also went off; took a coach in the Rue Mazarine, and returned home about eleven o’clock. Though I knew of his disguise, I confess I was struck and almost frightened to see him accoutred so. I took him for a spectre, or shade of Ninus, that was appearing to me; or, at least, for one of those ancient Irish debaters, arrived at the end of their career, after wearing themselves out in school-

sylogisms. I helped him to doff all that apparatus, which I carried next morning to its true owner — a Doctor of the Sorbonne.”

Even if the critics did not penetrate Voltaire's disguise on that eavesdropping occasion, he was probably recognized by some of the attendants. For he was a constant patron of the café, and until the time, not so many years ago, when it closed its doors, Voltaire's table and chair were preserved as the most precious relics of the establishment. Even on the occasion of his last triumphant visit to Paris, when the Academy and society and the populace vied with each other in doing him honour, and when at a performance of his latest play, “*Irène*,” he was crowned with laurel in his box in the theatre, he did not forget the haunt of his earlier years but included the Café Procope in his round of Saturnian visits.

Rousseau, too, had his memories of the Procope — memories of success and failure. Undaunted by the adverse verdict of the Academy on his new plan of musical notation, he continued his labours until finally they had result in the operetta, “*Devin du Village*,” which, after the surmounting of many obstacles, was at length produced in Paris and received with unusual enthusiasm. The echoes of that success were heard in the Café Procope, for the author was escorted thither in triumph by Concordet, who bore him on his shoulders

round the café as he shouted, " Long live French music! "

But a night or two later Rousseau had a quite different experience. In his earlier years he had written a comedy entitled " Narcisse," the secret of which he imparted to a comedian friend. Impressed by the success of the operetta, then being performed at the Opera House, this comedian arranged for the production of " Narcisse " anonymously at the Comédie-Française. It survived for two performances only on that occasion, but Rousseau was so bored with the first that he had to leave the theatre before the last act. Crossing over to the Café Procope he found there several of his friends who had been as wearied with the comedy as the unknown author. Rousseau, however, was in a penitent and even generous mood. Although the secret of the authorship had been well kept he felt he could not keep it himself. So he rose in the café and announced, " The new piece has fallen flat, and it deserved to fall flat; it wearied me to death. It is by Rousseau of Geneva, and I am that very Rousseau." It is characteristic of the man that in placing this incident on record he observed that his public confession was " much admired " and caused him little pain. It was doubtless sufficient for the moment that his action had restored him to the good graces of the patrons of the café.

Beaumarchais, however, could look back upon his

great night at the Café Procope with unalloyed satisfaction. It was long delayed, it is true, but when it came it proved worth waiting for.

Having, in 1778, completed a comedy under the title of "The Marriage of Figaro," Beaumarchais discovered once more that it was one thing to write a play and quite another to secure permission for its production on the stage. Perhaps, remembering his experience with "The Barber of Seville," he may have anticipated a wait of a couple of years before "The Marriage of Figaro" could be performed. But he had to be patient for a longer period than that. It was not until three years after it had been written that it was accepted by the Comédie-Française, the actors of which were then so enthusiastic over their parts that the author at once requested the chief of police to appoint a censor without delay. But the censor's report was unfavourable; the comedy was pronounced "detestable." The fact was that Louis XVI, who has rarely been credited with any mental discernment, at once perceived the danger of the comedy, in that anticipating the verdict of Napoleon, who saw in it the "Revolution already in action." So three more years had to pass ere, by intrigue, Beaumarchais at length obtained the necessary permission for the public performance of his comedy.

In the interval the piece had become well known in social circles. The censor seems to have allowed



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copies to be made from the manuscript in his possession, and the author himself read the play in many salons. Paris, then, was keyed to a pitch of abnormal excitement as the day for the performance drew near, and the author, confident of the triumph in store for his comedy, entertained a large party of his friends at the Café Procope a few hours before that performance took place. As the Café Procope was opposite the Comédie-Française, Beaumarchais commanded an excellent view of the dense crowds waiting outside the theatre, a sight to flatter even his vanity and contribute to the success of his dinner party.

Although Beaumarchais is not thought to have realized the revolutionary tendency of his famous comedy, or to have foreseen that his travesty of the society of his day tended to the destruction of that society, another patron of the Café Procope, Diderot to wit, had a clear notion of the mark at which he aimed. And in the history of the café it is recorded that his special delight was to sit in his favourite corner and emit startling paradoxes for the exclusive horriification of that agent of the chief of the police who frequented the resort in the hope of gleaning information which by faithful reporting might conduce to his own promotion. His superior, however, had a sense of humour and took Diderot less seriously. Hence when his agent reported that Diderot had the previous night declared in the

Café Procope that one could not see a soul, the undismayed chief ejaculated, “*M. Diderot se trompe. L’âme est esprit, et M. Diderot est plein d’esprit.*” A rejoinder which seems to show that at that time the liquors served at the Café Procope included something stronger than coffee.

Notwithstanding these literary and theatrical associations, as soon as the French Revolution broke out the Café Procope seems to have attracted patrons of a different character. From about 1790 onward the most conspicuous among its clients were the men who figured most prominently in that terrible upheaval. Here, then, drinking coffee or stronger beverages, or playing chess, or reading the newspapers, or engaging in animated debate, might have been seen Marat, with his large bony face, flat nose, thin lips, grayish-yellow eyes, livid complexion, black beard and brown hair; and Robespierre, with his projecting brow, his blue and deeply-set eyes, his long lips, his profuse chestnut hair; and Danton, with his pock-marked face, terrible in its ugliness, and his piercing eyes; and Camille Desmoulins, bilious of visage, but smiling as though every victory were already won. Hébert, too, was not unknown at the Café Procope, where, one excited night, he seized upon Voltaire’s marble table and, planting it before the door of the café, mounted it as a platform from whence to harangue the passing crowd. And a greater than any of these came

to the café now and then, none other, in fact, than a young man of taciturn visage named Napoleon Bonaparte. Once, so the legend goes, he came hither without his purse and was obliged to leave his hat in pledge until he could return and pay his reckoning.

In more recent days there was a time when it seemed as though the literary glories of the Café Procope might be revived. For it became a favourite haunt with Paul Verlaine, who preëmpted Voltaire's table and seat and held his court in the tiny saloon at the rear of the café. The poet of decadence had many followers, and his advent at the Procope meant a large addition to the customers of the hour, but unhappily their purses were as ill-equipped as that of their master, and their patronage did not contribute greatly to the coffers of the café. And when Verlaine died even that scanty revenue vanished, and no new poet took his place. That was the last flicker of the famous café. After a glorious career of more than two and a half centuries, it fell a victim to those forces of neglect and iconoclasm which have wrought such destruction among the haunts of old Paris.

Notwithstanding its associations with many men of letters, the Café Procope, prior to the time when it became the haunt of Verlaine, makes no great figure in Bohemian history; indeed, despite the assertions of Henry Murger, the Bohemian memories of

Parisian cafés practically date from the time when that lively historian of the Latin Quarter was driven by poverty to make his daily experience the theme of his daily *feuilleton*. In the end Murger had on his hands a book which meant fortune for himself and fame for Bohemianism.

But, owing, no doubt, to the title under which that book is presented in its English translation, it is usually overlooked that the café which figures most conspicuously in Murger's pages is not situated in the Latin Quarter. It is true that the Café Momus stood quite close to the banks of the Seine, but it was on the right and not on the left bank of the river. Hence its history must be reserved for the following chapter. At the same time it must not be forgotten that, according to the testimony of Alexandre Schanne, who was a member of the famous Bohemian band, Murger and his friends did not confine their dubious patronage to the Café Momus but were also in the habit of frequenting the Café Rotonde, which, as it was situated at a corner of the Rue Hautefeuille and the Rue de l'Ecole de Médecine, belongs undoubtedly to the left-bank history of Bohemianism.

Without attempting to rival his friend in lively dialogue or incident, Schanne has left a picture of the nightly scene at the Rotonde which shows by its literalism that Murger's chapters were not overdrawn. "Every evening," says Schanne, "the first

comer, at the waiter's inquiry, 'What will you take, sir?' never failed to reply, 'Nothing just at present, I am waiting for a friend.' The friend arrived, to be assailed by the brutal question, 'Have you any money?' He would make a despairing gesture in the negative, and then added, loud enough to be heard by the *dame du comptoir*, 'By Jove, no, only fancy, I left my purse on my console-table, with gilt feet, in the purest Louis XV style. Ah! what a thing it is to be forgetful.' He would sit down, and the waiter would wipe the table as if he had something to do. A third would come who was sometimes able to reply, 'Yes, I have ten sous.' 'Good,' we would reply, 'order a cup of coffee, a glass and a water-bottle; pay and give two sous to the waiter to secure his silence.' This would be done. Others would come and take their places beside us, repeating to the waiter the same chorus, 'We are with this gentleman.' Frequently we would be eight or nine sitting at the same table, and only one customer. Whilst smoking and reading the papers we would, however, pass the glass and bottle. When the water began to run short, as on a ship in distress, one of us would have the impudence to call out, 'Waiter, some water.' The master of the establishment, who understood our situation, had no doubt given orders for us to be left alone, and made his fortune without our help. He was a good fellow and an intelligent one, having subscribed to all the

scientific periodicals of Europe, which brought him the custom of foreign students.”

\ How different that picture from the one drawn by the popular novelist who dishes up the Bohemianism of the Latin Quarter in the hope of repeating Murger’s success! Most of the students of the P. N. appear to be flush of money; the marble-top tables of his café are slobbered with beer; the noisy customers pelt each other with handfuls of billiard chalk or café spoons; the air is laden with orders for bocks; and the only thing that seems to trouble those heroes is, not poverty but an inability to get their pictures hung in the Salon or their articles published in the newspapers. With Murger, Bohemianism was a stage in artistic life; with his imitators it is a blend of free drinking and free love.

Although the haunts of Murger’s grisettes on both sides the Seine have long disappeared, there survived until quite recently, in the Vachette, a café which worthily perpetuated the best traditions of old Paris. It was one of the oldest of the club-café’s of the Quarter. And, as with the Rotonde and the Momus, its atmosphere combined gaiety and gravity to an unusual degree. There are cafés in the Quarter wholly given over to the most degrading type of Bohemianism; the Vachette traditions leaned more to scholarship than sensuality. Not that the spirit of the place was entirely severe; re-



HENRY MURGER.

spectable would fit the case more closely. On pardonable occasions, such as carnival time and Christmas and New Year celebrations, the Vachette was as gay as the rest, yet even on those privileged days it was not uncommon to hear metaphysical jokes and puns in Greek. Hence when a young professor of philosophy unbent to the extent of entertaining his pupils he would elect the Café Vachette as a matter of course, while elderly instructors might keep late hours under its roof without having their virtue suspected.

But as Verlaine's death sounded the knell of the Café Procope, it would seem as though the demise a year ago of Jean Moréas had something to do with the passing of the Vachette. That Athens-born but wholly Parisianized poet, a grandson of one of Byron's heroes of Missolonghi, had for many years made the Vachette his headquarters, and was nightly from nine to two the centre of a large band of disciples. In the early years of his patronage his talk was compact of symbolism, which no one defended more vigorously from the charge of being "decadent;" but for some time preceding his death he was just as pronounced in decrying the license claimed by the symbolists. All that, however, made no difference to his following at the Vachette, for to the last his advent, somewhere about the hour of nine, always meant a large accession of customers. But no one succeeded to his leadership; his disci-

ples dispersed; and the Vachette has definitely joined the history of old Paris.

Oblivion, too, and that twice-told, has also overtaken another left-bank haunt of literary men. Not only has the Magny restaurant been pulled down and rebuilt in a style having no likeness to its predecessor, but the name of the street in which it was situated has been changed from the Rue Contrescarpe to the Rue Mazet.

Happily, however, thanks to the copious "Journal" of the Goncourt brothers, there is no danger of oblivion overtaking the famous dinners held at the Magny. Those friendly and literary festivals seem to have been founded by Garvarni, otherwise the famous caricaturist Sulpice G. Chevalier, and Charles A. Sainte-Beuve, the most illustrious critic of the nineteenth century. How it came to pass that they selected the Magny for the scene of their reunions seems mysterious in view of the modest reputation of that establishment, where, in the forties, the most elaborate dinner did not involve an expenditure of more than three francs. Perhaps the quality of the table had improved by 1862, when the dinners were begun, or it may be that the remoteness and quietness of the restaurant were the chief factors.

In many respects the Magny dinners are comparable in the history of French literature with the meetings of that Club which was the focus of the

genius of London in the eighteenth century. The membership was select from the start and was kept select to the end. All told, and when most numerous, the band included fourteen men of letters, the two founders and the following: Charles Edmond, Paul de Saint-Victor, Turgueniev, Taine, Baudry, E. Soulie, Edmond de Goncourt, Jules de Goncourt, Renan, Dr. Veyne, De Chennevières, M. Comte de Nieuwerkerke, and Théophile Gautier. Although distinguished men were often present as visitors, actual election to the fellowship was made a matter of serious discussion and formal voting. And when a candidate was elected, he was informed of the fact in a style akin to the ceremonious initiation adopted by The Club in London. Thus, Jules de Goncourt, in announcing to Gautier his admission to the circle wrote that he had "the honour" of informing him of his unanimous election, and gave the day and hour for his formal installation.

At first the dinners were held on Saturdays every fortnight, but later the day of meeting was changed to Monday. As the total membership was so near the unlucky number it was not unusual for the superstitious to be rendered uneasy. Thus one evening, Saint-Victor, in the midst of an eloquent eulogy of a friend, paused to exclaim that there were thirteen at the table. "Bah!" retorted Gautier, "only Christians count, and there are several atheists present!" But Gautier himself was sufficiently

alarmed to agree that the restaurant-keeper's son be sent for to break the spell.

Although in the main pleasant enough gatherings, a reminiscence of one dinner by Jules de Goncourt is sufficient evidence that the pleasure was not that of stagnation. "After a violent discussion at Magny's," he wrote, "from which I have just emerged with beating heart and parched throat, I am fully convinced of the following: All political discussion comes to this, 'I am worth more than you are!' All literary discussion, 'I possess better taste than you!' All artistic discussion, 'I see more clearly than you do!' All musical discussion, 'I am gifted with a better ear than you can boast of!' It is rather alarming, nevertheless, to see how isolated we are in all controversy, and how few proselytes we make."

Doubtless Sainte-Beuve was the chief cause of the heated debates at the Magny dinners. It is true he often enlivened the proceedings with new anecdotes, drawing liberally on his great stores of reminiscence, but for the most part he argued for the sake of arguing and would defend or attack the same author according as he was criticized or eulogized. One of his stories related to an episode of the early career of Robespierre. He knew at Boulogne an old librarian named Isnard, who had been professor of rhetoric in the Oratorian school at Arras. Robespierre had been his pupil, and he used to tell how

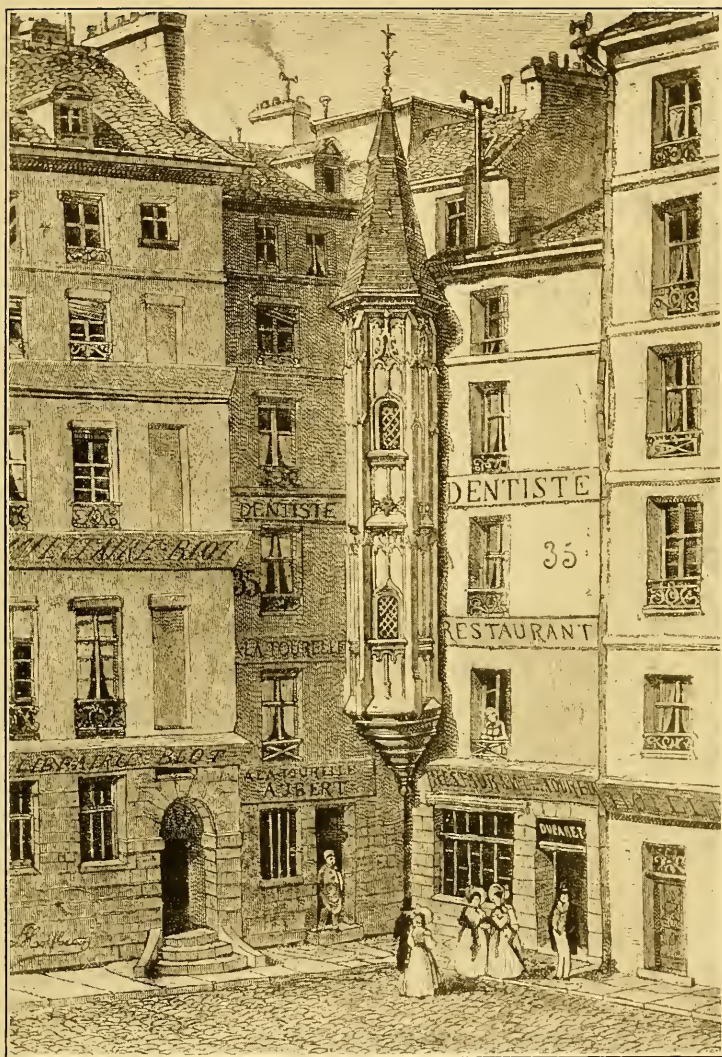
the latter, having become a briefless barrister, and time hanging heavy on his hands, had taken to writing poetry. His first literary effort had for its theme "The Art of Spitting and Blowing One's Nose;" but Robespierre's sister, fearing lest the publication of this poem should lose him what small practice he had, sought out Isnard, and consulted him as to how its publication might be delayed. Accordingly, Isnard asked Robespierre to read him the poem, and observed, "Good, very good indeed, but you must polish, you must polish." And while the polishing was in progress, the Revolution happened and turned the poet to other occupations.

But Sainte-Beuve was not always in this reminiscent mood. Thus, when at one dinner the name of Victor Hugo was suddenly mentioned, Sainte-Beuve "started as if he had been bitten by some animal under the table, and declared that Hugo is a charlatan, the first man who speculated in literature. Whereupon Flaubert observed that he is the only man in whose skin he would gladly find himself. 'No, no,' answered Sainte-Beuve, justly enough, 'one would never wish to give up one's own personality.'" And then, as was often his manner, he seemed to relent his strong words, and admitted that it was Hugo who first taught him verse, besides instructing him in painting. "He has a marvellous temperament," he added. "His barber once told me that the hair of his head was three times as

strong as that of any other man, and blunted all the razors. He has the teeth of a wolf, teeth which could crush peach stones. And what eyes!" And so peace would reign once more.

To be broken as violently, perhaps, at the next dinner. But that time it was the turn of Balzac. He admitted him to be a great man of genius, but affirmed that he was not true to life. And then the talk around the dinner-table waxed furious, leading at length to a depreciation of Homer by Edmond de Goncourt. "Your Homer," he said, "only describes physical sufferings; it is much more difficult to depict those that are moral. I tell you frankly that the poorest psychological novel is of greater interest to me than all your Homer put together." This was rank treason to Saint-Victor. With eyes blazing he declared that such nonsense inclined him to fling himself out of the window; "you are quite crazy," he shouted, stamping his foot; "the Greeks are beyond discussion." But even that storm, so remindful of that Homeric conflict described by Montesquieu two centuries earlier, abated at last; Saint-Victor shook hands with his opponent, and the dinner was resumed.

One tempestuous dinner at the Magny, however, had a less peaceful issue. It was in the days of the Franco-German war, and something prompted Renan to proffer a eulogy of the enemies of France. When studying any question, he said, he had always



RESTAURANT TOURELLE.

been struck "by the superiority of German work and German intellect. It is not astonishing that they should have attained such proficiency in the art of war, for their efficiency has been displayed in other ways. Yes! gentlemen, the Germans are a superior race." The table was in an uproar in a moment; and when, some years later, Jules de Goncourt published the notes he had made of the discussion, the trouble was renewed, for Renan stoutly denied having used the words attributed to him and henceforward reckoned the diarist as an enemy.

That, however, is the only unpleasant memory associated with the Magny dinners. Heated as were the discussions, they all ended in friendliness, and have given the restaurant an enviable chapter in the literary annals of Paris.

Notwithstanding the disappearance of such famous resorts as the Procope, the Vachette, the Magny and the Rotonde, it must not be forgotten that there still remain on the left bank of the river some cafés and restaurants which appeal to the lover of historic associations or the epicure. There is the Café Foyot, for example, much affected by patrons of the Odéon for after-theatre suppers, which preserves its old-time aspect and is innocent of white and gold, the electric lamps and orchestra that are thought to be indispensable in up-to-date establishments of that class. Nor are the patrons of the

Foyot restricted to playgoers; many noted artists and men of letters are numbered among its clients.

And the Latin Quarter can yet boast not a few of those students' cafés such as that in which George Moore met his Irish waitress — cafés, as he observed, furnished with tapestries and oak tables, and old-time jugs and Medicis gowns, and where a student occasionally catches up a tall bock in his teeth, drains it at a gulp, and, after turning head over heels, walks out without having smiled. Few of these cafés, however, have any remarkable associations; their interest consists chiefly in their difference from the cafés over the river.

But there is one establishment which can claim a history that makes even the Café Procope seem a place of yesterday. More than a century before the house opposite the Comédie-Française opened its doors there had been established by the side of the Seine an eating-house to which had been given the picturesque title of the Tour d'Argent. The traditions of the Silver Tower record that shortly after it was opened in 1582 it speedily won the favour of Parisians as the most fashionable restaurant of the city, and despite the movement which has transferred to the right bank of the Seine most of the notable resorts of gourmands, the Silver Tower still maintains its high reputation as the Mecca of good cooking.

Although the present home of the Silver Tower dates only from the time of Louis Philippe, at which period the Quai de la Tournelle, on which it stands, was constructed, it occupies the same site as the ancient building of which it is the comparatively modern successor. Not that it is particularly modern in its appearance. On the contrary, it is wholly free from the garishness of paint and gilding so much in evidence among other Parisian restaurants, and there is little more than a bunch of fruit in its old-fashioned window to indicate the nature of the establishment. Half-way up the façade, however, hangs the artistic sign of the house, reminiscent of the beautiful signs of the sixteenth century, and displaying the proud date of 1582 above its tower of silver.

Could Apicius visit Paris it is to the Silver Tower he would first bend his steps. For from its earliest days to its most recent it has been the pride of this house to sustain the repute of French cooking. If its associations are not professedly literary, it can yet boast that countless famous men have sat at its tables, including Napoleon, Edward VII, and many others who regarded the sustenance of the body as something more than a satisfaction of hunger. For many years the culinary mysteries of the Tour d'Argent were presided over by the illustrious Frédéric to whom has been awarded the high praise of being the "most famous maître d'hôtel Paris has

ever known." His praises were sung in many stanzas by the Marquis Lauzières de Thémines :

*" L'an quinze cent quatre-vingt-deux rapelle:
Qu'en plein Paris un homme intelligent
Inaugurait au quai de la Tournelle
Un restaurant dit de la Tour d'Argent.
Qui le fonda, ne le dit pas l'histoire.
Mais de nos jours (c'est connu du public),
Celui qui l'a s'en fait honneur et gloire,
Le créateur des mets est Frédéric."*

As that sample shows, the poet was indifferent to the name of the founder of the Silver Tower; it was sufficient for him to sing its glory in the person of its wonderful chef. And now that Frédéric is no more, and the restaurant has a new owner in the person of André Terrail, there is to be no falling off in that catering for the epicure for which the house has been famous for so many generations. The ducks will still be numbered as in the old days, trout and crayfish will continue to swim about in their tanks all alive until an order from a customer signs their death-warrant, and although some of the rooms, and notably that in which Napoleon dined, are to be refurnished, everything will be carried out in the best Empire style. Thus for many years to come the Silver Tower will preserve the old traditions of Paris on the left bank of the Seine.

CHAPTER V

CAFÉS OF THE RIGHT BANK

PERHAPS the most conclusive proof of the rapidity with which the coffee-house attained popularity in old Paris on both sides of the Seine is provided by the fact that only five years after the opening of the Café Procope the new type of public resort was seized upon as a theme for stage use.

On an August night, then, in 1694, the patrons of the Comédie-Française, after a performance of the "Cid," had submitted to their suffrages a one-act comedy entitled, "Le Café." It was the work of Jean Baptiste Rousseau, the son of an industrious shoemaker, who by parental indulgence was afforded the means and the liberty to pose as a man about town. No doubt the worthy shoemaker made one of the audience in the Comédie-Française on that notable night, full of fatherly pride in the author. The reception of "Le Café," however, was not cordial. Rousseau was not equal to his opportunity, and his attempt to hit off the characteristics of the frequenters of the new resorts resolved itself into a mere catalogue unrelieved by plot or dialogue. Three years later Rousseau tried again with a five-act comedy, "Le Flatteur," and this time captured

the favour of his audience. His shoemaker father was in the theatre, and when the play was over made his way to the green room, where his son was surrounded by a crowd of dandified admirers. But his congratulations and claim of parenthood jarred upon Jean Baptiste in the moment of his triumph. “*He my father,*” he said to a companion in a sneering tone, “the fellow must be mad!”

That incident is sufficient to explain the man. That he who could renounce the author of his being should also be capable of lampooning his closest friends might be expected. But that fatal defect of character wrought its own Nemesis. Rousseau was in the habit of frequenting the Café Laurent, a favourite rendezvous of the literary men of the early eighteenth century, and there he put in circulation, in an anonymous way, many snatches of verse full of bitter satire of his companions. He was, however, suspected of the authorship, and after a lively quarrel was turned out of the café. Even that did not cure him of his ill-nature, but when, several years later, he perpetrated another satire more offensive than his café libels he was brought to trial and banished from the country.

Another early memory of the cafés of the right bank of the Seine recalls the personality of an English peer who was in many respects the counterpart of the French poet. “Wanting nothing but an honest heart,” was Pope’s verdict on Philip, Duke of

Wharton, who haunted the cafés of Paris in 1716. At Lyons, whither he had been sent with a tutor, he picked up a bear's cub, and when he determined to abscond from that city he donated his pet to his mentor with the following note: "Being no longer able to bear your ill usage, I think proper to be gone from you; however, that you may not want company, I have left you the bear, as the most suitable companion in the world that could be picked for you."

As soon as he arrived in Paris Lord Wharton began to frequent the English Café and indulge his passion for gambling. And he was as free with his tongue as with his money. As those were the days when the Old Pretender was keeping his exiled court at St. Germain's there were plenty of Jacobites in Paris, and the eccentric Wharton took a keen delight in this day posing as one of the band and the next as a Whig. In his Whiggish moods he informed his Jacobite companions that he was to be appointed "Lord of the Bedchamber to the Devil," and when they solemnly rebuked him and informed him that they must deprive themselves of his company if he continued using such "disrespectful" language, he promised to be very cautious in future and to frequent the Dutch Café instead of the English. The next night, however, he appeared at the English Café as usual, but behaved himself "as violent a Jacobite as any one in Paris." The record

of Wharton's exploits, which is to be found only in some private letters of the period, is of interest as showing that the cafés soon caught the hostelry habit of catering for different nationalities.

But the native Parisian was not overlooked. On the right bank of the Seine as well as on the left there were soon established numerous cafés in which any one save a Frenchman would have been somewhat ill at ease. And to this day there is no region where cluster more thickly the memories of historic cafés than the Palais Royal.

Singular indeed has been the story of that blend of palace and public garden and arcade known as the Palais Royal. The main building, erected by Richelieu in 1636 and known as the Palais Cardinal until 1643, when it became a royal possession under Richelieu's will, has known many names and uses until to-day it is occupied by the Conseil d'Etat. The three galleries which surround the garden, and in which so many cafés were to find a home, were constructed by the infamous Philippe Égalité as a means of increasing his revenue. The long lines of shops and cafés in those galleries brought in a handsome income and were the means of transforming the Palais Royal into the fashionable centre of Paris.

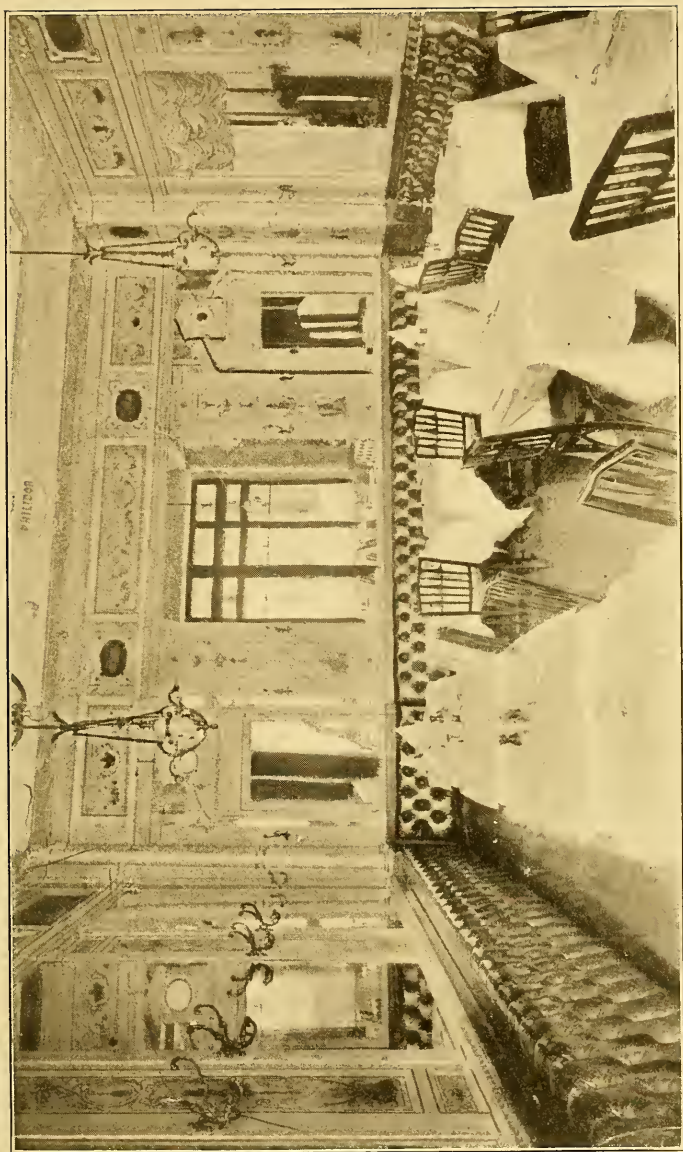
Even prior to those days the garden of the Palais Royal was a favourite promenade and haunt of the debauchee and could boast of at least one famous

café. Diderot in his "Rameau's Nephew" has left a vivid picture of the resort as it was about the year 1760. "In all weathers, wet or fine, it is my practice to go, towards five o'clock in the evening, to take a turn in the Palais Royal. I am he whom you may see any afternoon sitting by myself and musing in D'Argenson's seat. I keep up talk with myself about politics, love, taste, or philosophy; I leave my mind to play the libertine unchecked, and it is welcome to run after the first idea that offers, sage or gay, just as you see our young beaux in the Foy passage following the steps of some gay nymph, with her saucy mien, face all smiles, eyes all fire, and nose a trifle turned up; then quitting her for another, attacking them all, but attaching themselves to none. My thoughts — these are the wantons for me. If the weather is too cold or too wet, I take shelter in the Regency coffee-house. There I amuse myself by looking on while they play chess. Nowhere in the world do they play chess as skilfully as in Paris, and nowhere in Paris as they do at this coffee-house; 'tis here you see Légal the profound, Philidor the subtle, Mayot the solid; here you see the most astounding moves, and listen to the sorriest talk, for if a man be at once a wit and a great chess-player, like Légal, you may also be a great chess-player and a sad simpleton, like Joubert and Mayot."

Macaulay was doubtless familiar with that pas-

sage; at any rate, when, seventy years later, he was on the eve of a visit to Paris, he informed a friend that of the two things there he was most impatient to see one was the Palais Royal. Nor was he disappointed. "As a great capital," he wrote, "is a country in miniature, so the Palais Royal is a capital in miniature — an abstract and epitome of a vast community, exhibiting at a glance the politeness which adorns its higher ranks, the coarseness of its populace, and the vices and the misery which lie underneath its brilliant exterior. Everything is there, and everybody. Statesmen, wits, philosophers, beauties, dandies, adventurers, artists, idlers, the king and his court, beggars with matches crying for charity, wretched creatures dying of disease and want in garrets." At the time of Macaulay's visit the famous cafés of the Palais Royal were at the height of their prosperity, the oldest of all, the Café de la Regence, being still where it was in the days of Diderot.

Indeed among the cafés still existing in Paris none can boast so long a history as the Regency. So long ago as 1688, so the legend runs, an enterprising Parisian named Lefèvre began selling cups of coffee in the square of the Palais Royal, but whether from a portable urn such as figures in Bouchardon's sketch of the street vendor who cried "Café! Café!" or from a stall, is not clear. In the end, however, he must have secured a habitation of some



A SALOON IN THE REGENCY CAFÉ.

kind, for he built up a business which he eventually disposed of to one Leclerc, who, in 1718, christened his establishment the Café de la Regence. That name was, of course, in honour of the Regent Orleans, and the café has preserved the title to this day, an unusual example of stability in a city as changeable in its nomenclature as a weathercock.

Apart from the proximity of the café to the palace in which the Regent carried on his notorious orgies, the establishment had an invaluable asset in the person of the proprietor's wife, a woman of so many charms that the gallants of the day, not excluding the Regent himself, presented her with a poem entitled "Patent of Venus for Madame Leclerc, mistress of the Café de la Regence." So ravishing was "le belle cafetière" that the young Marquis Choiseul-Labaume was eloquent in her praises. But in his eulogies he did not sufficiently distinguish the things that differ. Hence, when, one day, he told his uncle, the Archbishop of Châlons, that he had seen a most exquisite cafetière, that unworldly ecclesiastic, convinced that such a beautiful work of art could not be in more suitable hands than those of his nephew, at once presented the youth with twenty-five louis with which to purchase it. The story does not say whether Madame Leclerc regarded the sum as adequate.

From its earliest days, however, and notwithstanding the salacious fame it acquired through be-

ing made the scene of a "love" episode in a typical Parisian play, the Regency attracted other than gallants as its clients. Diderot spoke the truth when he explained how he went thither to watch the chess-players. In the early years of his married life, when funds did not permit the purchase of coffee for use at home, his wife was wont to hand him a few pence that he might go to the Regency for a cup and watch the games. He has perpetuated the names of some of the most famous players, such as Philidor, the greatest theoretician of the eighteenth century and far better remembered for his chess than his music, but he was too early to record that Robespierre too was to be numbered among the celebrated chess-players of the café. A story is told of one of his evenings here which presents him in a more amiable light than most of his doings during the Reign of Terror. One evening a nervous-looking young man seated himself at Robespierre's table and requested the favour of a game. He consented, and when he had played and lost two games, he asked his partner what the stakes were. The victor replied that he wanted the pardon of a young man who had been condemned to death, and it then transpired that the stranger was a young girl who had donned masculine attire in the hope of saving the life of her fiancé. Her ruse was successful, for Robespierre granted the pardon.

Napoleon, too, is numbered among the famous

chess-players of the Regency. He frequented the café before he became Consul and after, and the table he used is still preserved among the relics of the establishment. Deschappelles, also, and Bourdonnais, and many another illustrious exponent of the game, can be counted among the chess-players who figure in the history of the café. It still maintains its traditions in that respect, though players no longer have to pay for their tables by the hour, with an extra charge in the evening for the candles by the side of the board, as used to be the rule in the olden days. Nor are they likely to be so disturbed as when Gambetta used to hold forth here in a loud voice and at last made one absorbed player protest that his noise hindered him from understanding his chessmen.

But in addition to its notable chess-players, the Regency can claim associations with a long line of illustrious men of letters. Le Sage, of "Gil Blas" fame, though unusually domestic for a writer, frequented the café and has enshrined its name in one of his books, while Jean Jacques Rousseau attracted a great crowd of followers to the place when he frequented it after the publication of "Emile." Voltaire, too, is numbered among its famous clients, and Beaumarchais, and Alfred de Musset, and Victor Hugo, and Théophile Gautier, and Henry Murger. The list might be greatly extended, until it became an outline history of French literature for

more than two centuries. And it is notable that this varied patronage has continued to the present day, surviving the removal of the café from the Palais Royal to the Rue St. Honoré, where, however, the rooms and decorations are redolent of eighteenth century traditions.

But all the associations of the Regency are what Byron might have called "tame and domestic" compared with the memories suggested by several of its rivals in the Palais Royal. True, all the cafés were lively enough during the French Revolution. Even the bookshops in the galleries were busy then. Arthur Young, who was in Paris in the month preceding the fateful July of 1789, described the pamphlet vendors as doing a thriving trade; every hour produced some new publication, and there were eager buyers all the time. "But the coffee-houses," he added, "present yet more singular and astonishing spectacles; they are not only crowded within, but other expectant crowds are at the doors and windows, listening *à gorge déployé* to certain orators, who from chairs or tables harangue each his little audience: the eagerness with which they are heard, and the thunder of applause they receive for every sentiment of more than common hardiness or violence against the present government, cannot easily be imagined."

These are general terms. Had the observant Mr. Young visited the Palais Royal a few Sundays later,

on Sunday, July 12th, to be precise, he would have witnessed a scene which would have obliged him to be more particular.

Paris was in a ferment on that day of rest. The States-General had met; the contest had been waged between the notables and the clergy and the third estate as to whether they should vote separately or as one assembly; foiled in their wish that the voting be taken in the mass, the elected representatives had formed themselves into the National Assembly and announced their determination not to separate until they had framed a new constitution for the country; and Louis XVI, persuaded that Necker was the real cause of the upheaval, had taken the extreme step of dismissing the only minister who enjoyed the confidence of the people. The air, then, was full of bodeful rumours on that Sunday morning. And to add to the excitement, about nine o'clock the walls of Paris were suddenly plastered with huge placards in the name of the king, inviting the citizens to remain quietly in their homes and not to be alarmed at the movements of troops through the city. The reference to the military was not "bluff;" almost as soon as the placards appeared bodies of infantry and cavalry, with some pieces of artillery, entered Paris, while officers and aides-de-camp rode hither and thither through the streets.

Heedless of the exhortation to remain quietly in their homes, the excited Parisians flocked in great

crowds to the chief places of public resort, and nowhere was there a larger or more agitated gathering than in the Palais Royal. It was at this juncture that there issued from the Café Foy a young journalist named Camille Desmoulins, one of those mediocre but vainglorious men who sprang into prominence so abundantly during the Revolution. Conscious that his particular hour had come, Desmoulins, his black eyes blazing with anger and his long black hair tossed about in the breeze, vaulted on to a table outside the café and began his eventful appeal to the passions of the mob.

“Citizens!” he cried, “the moment for action has arrived. The dismissal of M. Necker is the signal for a St. Bartholomew of the patriots. A hundred barrels of powder are placed under the Assembly to blow the deputies into the air. A hundred guns on Montmartre and Belleville are already pointed on Paris. Furnaces for red-hot shot are preparing in the Bastille. Men, women, and children will be massacred — none spared. This very evening the Swiss and German troops will issue from the Champs de Mars to slaughter us. One resource alone is left to us,” Desmoulins concluded, “which is to fly to arms!”

And suiting the action to the word, he drew a couple of pistols from his bosom, repeating, “To arms! To arms!”

But to distinguish friend from foe, patriot from



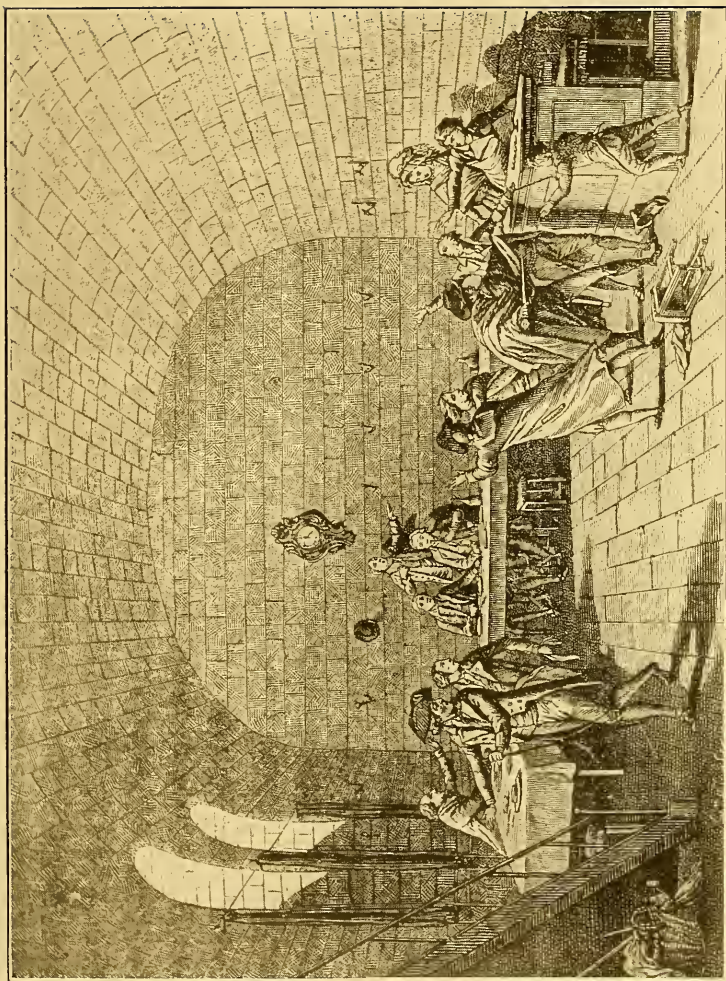
CAMILLE DESMOULINS OUTSIDE THE CAFÉ FOY.

aristocrat, a badge was necessary, some ribbon or cockade of an agreed colour. What should it be? "Let it be green," he shouted, "green — the colour of hope!" In a moment the trees of the Palais Royal were stripped of their verdant boughs, and the shops in the galleries plundered of every inch of ribbon of that hue. And then the turbulent mob, Desmoulins at its head, marched away from the Café Foy on its errand of Revolution.

In the quieter years of a later generation the Café Foy acquired a reputation for exclusiveness not quite in harmony with the part it played in being the starting point of the lawlessness of the Revolution. Almost to the day when it closed its doors it was distinguished among the cafés of Paris as one of the few in which smoking was not allowed. Those were the days, too, when it was frequented by the artist Antoine Charles Vernet, whose "Morning of Austerlitz" was rewarded by Napoleon with the Legion of Honour. As, however, he survives in the history of art more by his café scenes than his cavalry charges, it is fitting he should be remembered in connection with the Café Foy by an incident which led to his adorning the ceiling of that establishment. While dining there one day with a merry, wine-drinking crowd, the cork of a bottle of champagne got out of control and flew upward to the ceiling, where it left a disfiguring mark. Vernet called for a ladder and a brush and some paint, and

immediately transformed the ugly cork mark into a graceful swallow. Such a relic was, of course, carefully preserved to the last days of the café, kept fresh by that mysterious agency which seems to watch like a providence over anything there is profit in conserving.

Several of the most famous cafés of the Palais Royal owed their existence directly to the French Revolution. The chefs of the noble families, deprived of their employment by the ruin of their masters, could not all find occupation in catering for wealthy " patriots," and hence a considerable number became the servants of the omnipotent crowd by opening cafés or restaurants. Chief among these were Véry, Beauvilliers, and Février, who, in 1790 and 1791, purchased premises in one or other of the galleries of the Palais Royal and set up business there. The Véry restaurant was the speculation of two brothers who paid nearly two thousand francs for their arcades, while Beauvilliers secured his three arcades for a much smaller figure. Février, however, who professed great sympathy with the most violent of the " patriots," contented himself with a more modest establishment, his restaurant being nothing more than some low-vaulted cellars with simple tables and a minimum of illumination. Yet it was at Février's there took place one of the most dramatic incidents arising from the protracted voting of the Convention which condemned



ASSASSINATION OF LEPELLETIER IN FÉVRIER'S RESTAURANT.

Louis XVI to death. "It was at five on the Saturday evening," as Carlyle tells, "when Lepelletier St. Fargeau, having given his vote, *No Delay*, ran over to Février's in the Palais Royal to snatch a morsel of dinner. He had dined, and was paying. A thickset man 'with black hair and blue beard,' in a loose kind of frock, stepped up to him; it was, as Février and bystanders bethought them, one Pâris of the old King's Guard. 'Are you Lepelletier?' asks he. 'Yes.' 'You voted in the King's Business—?' 'I voted Death.' 'Scélérat, take that!' cries Pâris, flashing out a sabre from under his frock, and plunging it deep in Lepelletier's side. Février clutches him: but he breaks off; is gone."

Two other restaurants of the Palais Royal, Masse's and Méot's, are conspicuous in the annals of the Revolution. The former was a chosen resort of the royalists, whose dinners resulted in the publication of numerous pamphlets devoted to the cause of the King. The latter, Méot's, was also a royalist haunt to a large extent, until the times grew too dangerous. Méot had a high reputation for the excellence of his table and cellar; even when famine increased in Paris he was able to boast that he could give his clients a choice of twenty-two white and twenty-seven red wines, not to mention sixteen liqueurs. So enviable, indeed, was his reputation that such a pure "patriot" as Desmoulins exclaimed, "I am perfectly willing to celebrate the

Republic, provided the banquets are held at Méot's."

One of the apartments at Méot's was known as the "Red Room," and Edmond Biré has sketched a convivial scene which took place there when the "patriots" flooded the restaurant and indulged in the flesh-pots of the hated aristocrats. "One day Barère was dining with Vilate and Hérault-Séchelles — the elegant Séchelles, who is also an adept at reconciling the severest principles with the most lax observance of morality. 'Nature,' said Hérault, 'will be the goddess of the French, and the universe will be her temple.' The conversation then turned upon the Revolutionary Government which there was some talk of establishing. Said Hérault-Séchelles, with a sigh, 'Was Raynal right, after all, in declaring that a nation can only be regenerated in a bath of blood?' To this Barère replied: 'What is the present generation compared with the immensity of the centuries to come?' And with these words they each poured themselves out a glass of that marvellous *eau-de-vie* which comes from the cellars of Chantilly, and which is sold at sixty francs per bottle."

While the masters of the hour were able to indulge in what luxuries they fancied, other café frequenters, judging from the testimony of contemporary letters, were required to take their own bread with them, and such invitations as they extended

to their friends were given only on the condition that they came so provided. Those contemporary documents are also of great interest for the light they throw on the doings of the young aristocrats during that stormy period. They were never wholly repressed by the popular demagogues, and when at length their power began to wane they took an aggressive attitude in such places as the Café Chartres. Numbering between five and six hundred, they were distinguished for their semi-English attire, and when they had any particular plan to carry out they raided the streets and the cafés in the Palais Royal for new recruits.

But so long as their star was in the ascendant, the popular leaders, the "friends of the people," as they loved to call themselves after the manner of their kind, were the most faithful patrons of the cafés of the Palais Royal. "At last our turn has come to enjoy life," blurted out Danton at the end of a luxurious dinner in one of those cafés. "Sumptuous homes," he continued, "delicate fare, exquisite wines, silks and satins to wear, beautiful women — all these are the rewards of power. Since we are the stronger, let us therefore appropriate them. After all, what is the Revolution? A battle. And, as in every battle, should not the leaders share among themselves the *spolia opima*?" And so Desmoulins cared nothing about celebrating the Republic unless it meant a dinner of the expensive

viands and wines of Méot's, and Barère and Hérault-Séchelles sipped their costly liqueur as they talked of regenerating France in a bath of blood. It is a pity the history of the cafés of the Palais Royal is not better remembered; no record shows so luridly how the masses have always been the dupes of those who pose as their friends, men compact of the vilest hypocrisy and shouting for democracy and liberty as the easiest method of attaining notoriety and lining their own pockets. All the leaders of the Revolution were alike; the most eloquent members of the Commune, such as Hébert and Chaumette, would orate by the hour on the miseries of the people and the sins of the nobles, and then make straight for Méot's or Beauvillier's to recuperate their jaded patriotism on the rarest dishes and most expensive wines.

One other restaurant of the Palais Royal must not be forgotten, the Trois Frères Provençaux. As its name suggests, this was the enterprise of three brothers who hailed from Provence. Having vineyards of their own, it occurred to them that a Paris dépôt for the sale of the product might be advisable, but as they soon discovered that it would be wise to offer their clients something to eat as well as drink, it was not long ere they turned their establishment into a fully-equipped restaurant. And that it figured prominently in the convivial life of Paris from the early nineteenth century onward is obvious from

the place it occupies in literature. Balzac had much to say about it in his "Scenes from Paris Life," and Alfred de Musset, it will be remembered, made choice of one of its rooms as the scene in which the hero of his "La Confession d'un Enfant du Siècle" had his parting interview with the woman he loved. Lord Lytton, too, in "The Parisians," makes that restaurant the favourite haunt of his dandified Frederic Lemercier. It was thither he took the young Marquis de Rochebriant at the opening of the story, and his picture of its crowded rooms and its fashionable guests, who included "a saturnine Englishman who dined off a beef-steak and potatoes," is an interesting page of the history of the restaurant in its latter days. The bill for the two of fifty-nine francs bears witness that the prices were not moderate, while the manners of Lemercier, who "looked round the salon with that air of inimitable, scrutinizing, superb impertinence which distinguishes the Parisian dandy," suggest that the poser was a common sight at the Trois Frères.

As has been noted above, the Café de la Regence can claim its Rousseau association; and another coffee-house, the Café du Grand Commun, figures in his "Confessions" as the scene of an unusual incident in connection with the production of his "Devin du Village." The event affected Rousseau in such a singular manner that it is best given in his own words. "On the day following the rehearsal,"

he wrote, "I went to breakfast at the Café du Grand Commun, which was full of people, talking about the rehearsal of the previous evening, and the difficulty there had been of getting in. An officer who was present said that he had found no difficulty, gave a long account of the proceedings, described the author, and related what he had said and done; but what astounded me most in his long description, given with equal confidence and simplicity, was that there was not a word of truth in it. It was perfectly clear to me, that the man who spoke so positively about this rehearsal had never been present, since he had before his eyes the author, whom he pretended to have observed so closely, and did not recognize him. The most remarkable thing about this incident was the effect it produced on me. This man was somewhat advanced in years; there was nothing of the coxcomb or swaggerer about him, either in his manner or tone; his countenance was intelligent, while his cross of Saint-Louis showed that he was an old soldier. In spite of his unblushing effrontery, in spite of myself, he interested me; while he retailed his lies I blushed, cast down my eyes, and was on thorns; I sometimes asked myself whether it might not be possible to think that he was mistaken, and really believed what he said. At last, trembling for fear that some one might recognize me and put him to shame, I hurriedly finished my chocolate without saying a word, and, holding down

my head as I passed him, I left the café as soon as possible, while the company were discussing his description of what had taken place. In the street, I found that I was bathed in perspiration." The comment of John Morley on this curious incident credits Rousseau with a feeling of humiliation at the meanness of another.

Owing to their proximity to the meeting-place of the Jacobin Club several cafés and restaurants in the Rue St. Honoré were more favoured by Robespierre and his followers than those of the Palais Royal. Perhaps the most famous of these was Venua's, the master of which, however, spread his net wide. How wide may be inferred from the following advertisement, which appeared in a Paris newspaper in April, 1793. "Citizen Venua, restaurant-keeper at No. 75, close to the Riding School, having also an entrance in the house called the Hôtel des Tuileries, opposite the Jacobins, in the Rue Sainte-Honoré, announces that on and after April 18 there will be dancing on Sundays and holidays in his salon, where good beer and all kinds of iced drinks will be found. There are separate rooms for club-dinners. He contracts for all kinds of entertainments, including weddings and other festivities." Such an announcement on the part of the obliging Venua can be understood only when it is remembered that his house had been the meeting-place of the moderate Girondists, who, however,

were now quite out of favour and power. It was essential, then, that something be done to attract customers of a new type. Hence the oblique reference to the Tuileries Palace as "the house called the Hôtel des Tuileries" and the willingness of the accommodating Venua to allow dancing on Sundays and holidays.

Robespierre and his bosom friends did their best for Venua. If the Girondists no longer ate at his tables, the Jacobins would fill their places. Hence the memorable episode which took place in the restaurant directly after the trial of Marie Antoinette. In a private room there met at dinner Robespierre, Saint-Just, Barère and Vilate. When requested to give an account of the Queen's trial, which he had witnessed, Vilate told how Hébert had charged Marie Antoinette with an unnatural offence with her son, and of the profound impression made in the court when she replied: "I have not answered because nature refuses to answer such a charge brought against a mother. I appeal to all the mothers that are here." The narration so moved Robespierre that he, dashing his plate to the ground, exclaimed: "That fool of a Hébert! Is it not enough that she is really a Messalina? Must he make her an Agrippina into the bargain, and so clothe her with interest in the eyes of the people during her last moments?" And then the conversation at Venua's, punctuated by delicate foods and

costly wines, veered to the usual theme of the necessity of regenerating France in a bath of blood.

Was it at Venua's, one wonders, that there took place that inhuman deed which was the climax of the murder of Berthier? Slain by the mob for the crime of being the son-in-law of another of their victims, his heart was torn from his almost still-living body, carried in triumph through the streets on the point of a sword, and then cut into fragments and dipped in wine and eaten in a café of the Rue St. Honoré.

It is a pleasant relief to turn from such a revolting episode to the memory of a scene which took place in another Rue St. Honoré café a quarter of a century later. When a young man of twenty-two, Archibald Alison, the industrious historian of Europe, visited Paris at the time of its first occupation by the Allies, and he, in common with other Englishmen, received so many kindnesses from the Russian generals and officers that it was agreed to entertain them at dinner as some slight acknowledgment of their courtesy. The banquet took place at the Mapinot restaurant and proved a truly festive occasion. "Sixteen sat down to dinner," Alison noted in his autobiography, "and the utmost cordiality prevailed. Count Platoff, General Chernicheff, General Barclay de Tolly, Sir James Wylie, Sir William Crichton, and many others, honoured us with their presence — and, contrary to the usual

practice, the conviviality was prolonged to a late hour. We then saw, what was deeply interesting, Russian manners in moments of *bonhomie* and *abandon*; and their manners and usages impressed us with a strong sense of their wealth of feeling and sincerity of disposition. As the evening advanced, and the *ponche à la Romaine* and iced champagne began to produce their wonted effects, they became, without being noisy or violent, in the highest degree demonstrative in their exuberance. Every one drank wine with his neighbour after the Continental fashion, touching their glasses before they put them to their lips, and many were the toasts drunk to the 'Eternal Alliance of Great Britain and Russia.' Before parting, the company embraced after the German fashion; and the last thing I recollect is, seeing my brother, a man six feet high, lifted up by Platoff, who was six inches taller, and kissed in the air."

Still another café of the Rue St. Honoré, Voisin's, which yet exists, calls for a brief allusion. That quiet and refined resort, and also expensive, cannot boast any Revolution memories, but takes a mild pride in its associations with dramatists and men of letters. It was the scene of a somewhat agitated little supper-party after the first performance of Alphonse Daudet's "Les Rois en Exil," which consisted of the author and his wife and Zola and Jules de Goncourt. The reception of the play had been of

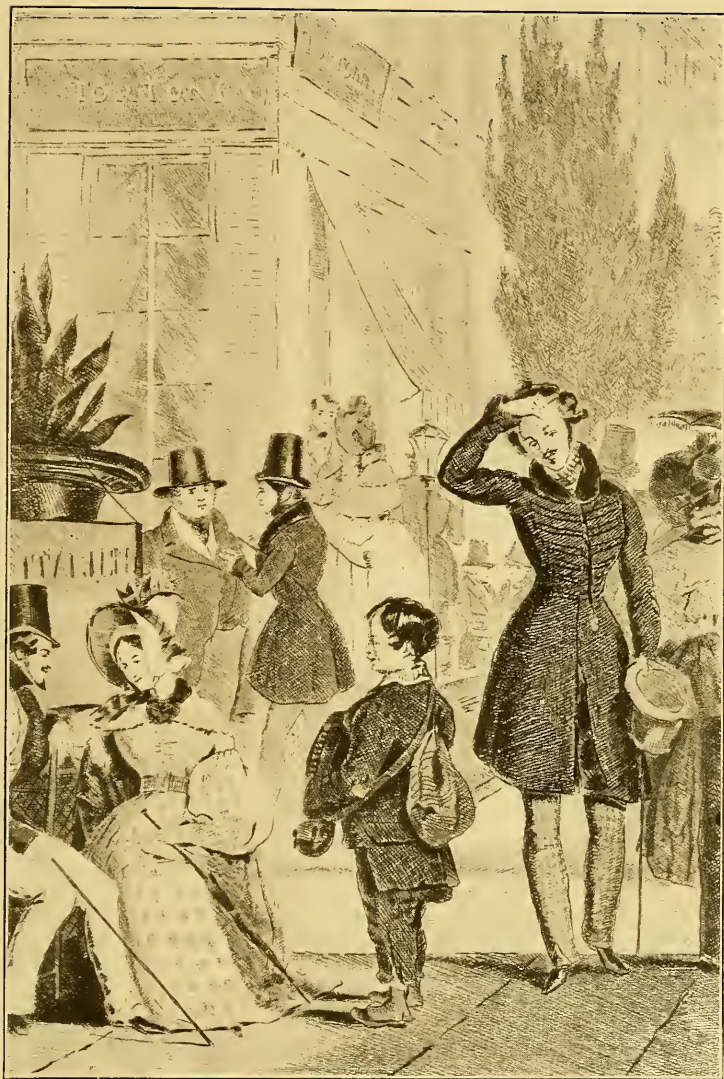
such a mixed nature that Madame Daudet was hardly in a mood for a festive occasion. Goncourt tried to cheer his friends with the reflection that the opposition of a portion of the audience had nothing political about it, while Zola enunciated the doctrine that a playwright ought to divest himself of nerves and be indifferent to public opinion. None of these things cheered Daudet, but after the champagne had circulated freely he began to recover his good spirits and take delight in the thought that his play had at any rate given him an opportunity to jibe at the old royalties and present a Bourbon running after an omnibus.

Next to the Palais Royal there is no section of Paris so rich in the history of famous cafés as the Boulevard des Italiens, the most noted and most fashionable of all those thoroughfares. And for many years there was no resort so much in favour on the Boulevard des Italiens as the Café Tortoni. Even so late as the young manhood of George Moore it was true, as the novelist has remarked, that to be seen there would make the fact of his presence in the city public property; "Tortoni was a sort of publication." The café was established in the early days of the Empire, and had become famous by the time the Allies occupied Paris for the second time. Hence a visitor to the city in 1815 found the benches and chairs outside the building crowded with fashionable people, for they afforded an unrivalled point

of view from whence to watch the promenaders of the boulevards.

In the upper portion of the building of which the café occupied the lower floor lived Louis Blanc at the time when he first became famous, and Albert Vandam relates how at nine o'clock each morning he used to come down to the café for his cup of *café au lait*, which was always the first cup of coffee served in the establishment. The same chronicler of Parisian history makes frequent references to the many interesting conversations he listened to outside Tortoni's. It was there, for example, he heard the true history of the climax of "Jeanne de Naples." That play, after dragging its weary length through the whole evening ended in an episode which saved it from failure. At the close the unhappy queen had the stage to herself and began what the author had intended to be a lengthy monologue. But hardly had she uttered a few lines than a stalwart soldier dashed on to the stage, seized her in his arms, and carried her off despite her struggles. The curtain fell to thunderous applause.

When the manager of the theatre, Lireux, made his usual appearance at Tortoni's the following afternoon, discussion at once reverted to the play of the previous night. "I can't understand," said one, "how a man with such evident knowledge of stagecraft as the author showed in his *dénoûement*,



OUTSIDE TORTONI'S.

could have been guilty of the tameness of what went before."

Lireux laughed, and asked whether his friend imagined the author of the play was responsible for the climax? To a reply in the affirmative, he rejoined:

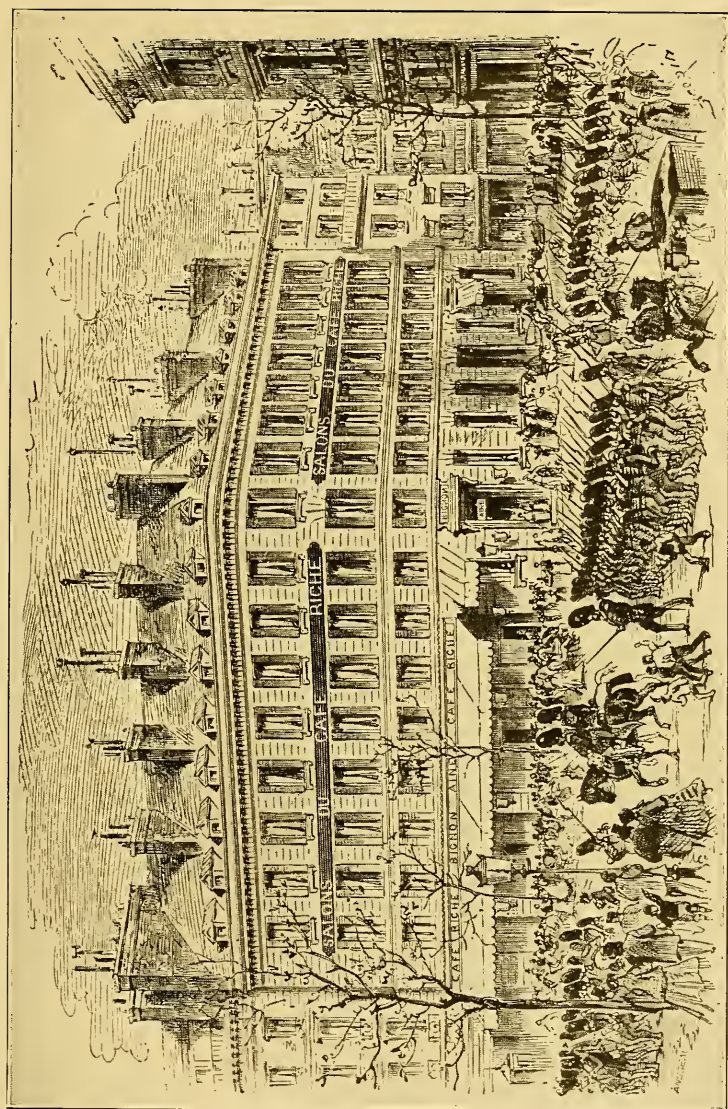
"Well, he was not. His dénouement was a speech which would have taken about twenty minutes, at the end of which the queen is tamely led off between two soldiers. I knew what would have been the result: the students would have simply torn up the benches and Heaven knows what else. You know that if the gas is left burning, if only a moment after twelve, there is an extra charge irrespective of the quantity consumed. I looked at my watch when she began to speak her lines. It was exactly thirteen minutes to twelve; she might have managed to get to the end by twelve, but it was doubtful. What was not doubtful was the row that would have ensued, and the time it would have taken me to cope with it. My mind was made up there and then. I selected the biggest of the supers, and told him to go and fetch her, and you know the rest."

Tortoni's patrons were not restricted to any one class. There were musicians, of whom Rossini may be taken as representative. When he won a sufficient income, he said, "Now I've done with music; it has served its turn; and I'm going to dine every day at Tortoni's." Talleyrand, too, used to dine

and meet his friends here. And the artists, Alfred Stevens and Édouard Manet among them, found the rendezvous an admirable place for the study of Parisian life. Manet, it is said, did not air his art at Tortoni's; as an impressionist he was not greatly in public favour; but he loved to haunt the café as a Parisian, watching the passing throng from the little terrace or lunching with friends inside. One of those friends says he can never go by the building — which still exists at the corner of the Rue Taitbout, though no longer a café — without having a vision of the painter in his favourite haunt.

On the same side of the Boulevard des Italiens, and almost next-door neighbours, once flourished the notorious Maison Dorée and the Café Riche. As they were both notable for their high prices and as the former was owned by one named Hardy, it became a proverb that a man must be “very rich to dine at the Hardy, and very hardy to dine at the Riche.”

Many a page of fiction has been consecrated to describing the revelries that took place at the Maison Dorée. Few restaurants even in Paris have catered more successfully for the entertainment of those who ate furiously and drank deep. The house was practically open all the year round. Of one client who lived close by the story is told that he divided his hours between his bed and the Maison Dorée. Never rising until late in the day, he turned



THE CAFÉ RICKE.

into the restaurant about three in the afternoon, and there remained drinking or eating until the small hours of the next morning. Lord Lytton in "The Parisians" elected the Maison Dorée for the scene of one of his liveliest supper parties at which there was much eulogy of champagne and great sorrow expressed for those nations which drank common beer or acrid wines. And Octave Feuillet allows one of his characters to get drunk under the same roof and then reel out into the street to throw a piece of gold into the mud and challenge a passing *chiffonier* to pick it up with his teeth.

Although the Café Riche still exists its most interesting history belongs to the past. In bygone years, as is obvious from the recollections of Albert Vandam, this café was in high favour with men of letters and musical celebrities, and even in the time of the Goncourts it was still the haunt of men who had greater interests in life than eating and drinking. "The Café Riche," so runs an entry of 1857 in the journal of the Goncourts, "seems to have become for the time being, the camp of literary dandyism. It is strange to see how entirely the public frequenting a given place are influenced by their surroundings; Bohemians are afraid of the white and gold, and red velvet; besides, their great man, Murger, is renouncing his old gods, and passing over bag and baggage to the bourgeoisie and the world on the other side; his friends are crying out against

the apostasy and treason of this new Mirabeau. Baudelaire supped beside us this evening. He had no cravat, he was barenecked, his head was shaven, and he seemed equipped for the guillotine. And yet he was full of the latest dandyism; his little hands were well washed, his nails pared, and as well cared for as those of a woman; withal, the head of a maniac, a voice as piercing as steel, and an elocution suggesting a happy imitation of St. Just. He denied obstinately, and with a certain bitter anger, that he ever outraged public morals."

It was at the Café Riche, too, that Murger was last seen in the enjoyment of his prosperity and fame. He had just had another play accepted and was in high spirits. Yet a month or so later the pitiful end came. And Jules de Goncourt had another gloomy memory of the café, for it was while sitting at one of its tables that he had for unknown companion an aged man who to the waiter's question as to what he desired, replied, "Alas, I desire the power to desire."

[According to Zola, the reputation of the Maison Dorée as a haunt of feverish pleasure and debauchery descended to the Café Anglais, another resort on the Boulevard des Italiens which came into existence at the downfall of the Empire. Judging from widely scattered allusions, that house has always made a special appeal to the epicure, and even in the days of the siege of Paris was able to offer its

patrons "such luxuries as ass, mule, peas, fried potatoes, and champagne." And when the siege was raised and normal conditions were restored, the Café Anglais, on the testimony of George A. Sala, once more asserted itself as the shrine of the gourmand.

But the associations of this café suffer through the eminence of its cuisine. Such is the law of compensation. Perfect menus seem to have the knack of not creating interesting history. If the oysters are delicious in flavour, the *Crécy* soup ideal, the *perdrix aux choux* done to a turn, and the wine "so much purple velvet to the taste," what more can be demanded? Certainly not a volume of legend. And so the Café Anglais must be content to shine in the pages of Zola as the scene of that sumptuous repast of which the sole purpose was to win for Silvianne a favourable notice from the dramatic critic who had been invited to the party. "While the flowers scattered perfume through the room, and the plate and crystal glittered on the snowy cloth, an abundance of delicious and unexpected dishes was handed round — a sturgeon from Russia, prohibited game, truffles as big as eggs, and hot-house fruit as full of flavour as if it were naturally matured. It was money flung out of the window, simply for the pleasure of wasting more than other people, and eating what they could not procure. The influential critic, though he displayed the ease

of a man accustomed to every sort of festivity, really felt astonished at it all, and became servile, promising his support, and pledging himself far more than he really wished to." So the function was a success, and the Café Anglais could flatter itself that it had secured the creation of another theatrical "star."

And yet it would be unjust to overlook the fact that there was one restaurant on the Boulevard des Italiens which combined refinement with memorable associations. This was the Café de Paris — not to be confused with the modern establishment of that title, with which its only link is that of a name — which Thackeray introduced into "Vanity Fair" as the scene of the gambling squabble between Becky and her husband and Colonel and Mrs. O'Dowd. That, however, was a blunder on Thackeray's part; he was too previous by some seven years, for the Café de Paris did not open its doors until 1822. Even had it been in existence during the winter following the battle of Waterloo, it was not the kind of resort which would have served the purposes of the adventurous Becky. Occupying a large suite of apartments in a mansion at the corner of the Rue Taitbout, the café was remarkable for its innocence of the usual display of white and gold, while the absence of mirrors elicited from Lord Palmerston the testimonial that "the epicure was not constantly reminded that, when in the act of

eating, he was not much superior to the rest of humanity." The rooms, indeed, were such that they might have been quickly transformed into private apartments for a family of wealth and refinement.

When the café first opened its doors it could boast a heritage of history. For its salons had been the home of Prince Demidoff, the eccentric and enormously wealthy descendant of that Russian blacksmith serf who conducted an iron foundry for Peter the Great and was ennobled by that monarch. The Demidoff wealth was greatly increased by mining operations, and hence that representative who had an establishment in Paris had ample means to indulge his every whim. It may be imagined, then, that the apartments secured for the Café de Paris were unlike the salons of any other restaurant in the city. Albert Vandam, its most eulogistic historian, tells us that the furniture was tasteful and costly, the rooms carpeted throughout, and that "the attendance was in every respect in keeping with the grand air of the place." No coal or gas was used: "lamps and wood fires upstairs; charcoal, and only that of a peculiar kind, in the kitchens, which might have been a hundred miles distant, for all we knew, for neither the rattling of dishes nor the smell of preparation betrayed their vicinity. A charming, subdued hum of voices attested the presence of two or three score of human beings attending to the inner man; the idiotic giggle, the

affected little shrieks of the shop-girl or housemaid promoted to be the companion of the quasi-man of the world was never heard there." Such being the appointments and traditions of the café, Alfred de Musset's remark that "you could not open its doors for less than fifteen francs" is not surprising.

All through its history the Café de Paris was distinguished as being an exception to the rule that perfect cuisine means empty annals. When Balzac called to announce that he was bringing a Russian guest to dinner and to request that the management would put its best foot forward, he was answered, "Assuredly, monsieur, we will do so, because it is simply what we are in the habit of doing every day." The eulogist of the café affirms that that was not an empty boast. Never was he told that a certain dish could not be recommended or that the fish could not be guaranteed. And there were no free-and-easy interchanges between waiters and guests; the latter never called the former by their names, and the former never spoke of a customer as "No. 5" but as "the gentleman at table No. 5." One of the most renowned dishes of the house, says Vandam, was *Veau à la casserole*, "the like of which I have never tasted elsewhere. Its recuperative qualities were vouched for by such men as Alfred de Musset, Balzac, and Alexandre Dumas. The former partook of it whenever it was on the bill; the others often came, after a spell of hard work, to recruit their mental

and bodily strength with it, and maintained that nothing set them up so effectually." The visits of Balzac, however, were spasmodic, as might be inferred from the constantly chaotic condition of his finances; those of De Musset were frequent, as also were the calls of Dumas, Eugène Sue, and many others. The latter was a confirmed posér, and after his dinner in the café would stand on the steps smoking his cigar and listening to the conversation with a superior air.

Dumas, on the other hand, was always his own hearty self, and was so great a favourite with the café management that he was the only patron who was allowed in the kitchens. One after-dinner incident at the café is cited by Vandam as an illustration of Dumas' good nature and an example of his fondness for culinary figures of speech. The party included a provincial professor, whose cameo breast-pin was greatly admired, and notably by Dumas, who remarked that it was a portrait of Julius Cæsar. To the question as to whether he were an archæologist, Dumas replied that he was "absolutely nothing," only to be challenged again by the professor on the ground that he had recognized Julius Cæsar. But that, Dumas said, was not wonderful as Cæsar was a Roman type, and besides he knew Cæsar "as well as most people, and perhaps better." That was a claim too startling for a provincial professor, and his amazement was increased

when Dumas claimed to have written a history of the great Roman. The professor had never heard of the book; it was not known in the learned world, surely a history of Cæsar ought to have made a sensation. "Mine has not made any," responded the imperturbable Dumas. "People read it, and that was all. It is the books which it is impossible to read that make a sensation: they are like the dinners one cannot digest; the dinners one digests are not as much as thought of next morning."

As may be inferred from the foregoing, the Café de Paris was eminently respectable. It had no dubious clients. That was well known to Louis Philippe, for when he was told that his sons, who were supposed never to be out at night, had been seen at the Café de Paris the previous evening, he remarked, "That's all right. As long as they do not go to places where they are likely to meet Guizot, I don't mind." Such a testimonial from such a king is conclusive.

Although Thackeray perpetrated an anachronism in connection with the Café de Paris and must not be relied upon as a historian of that establishment, his knowledge of Terre's eating-house in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs was evidently based upon intimate personal experience. Hence the proud pre-eminence of the English novelist as the author of "The Ballad of Bouillabaisse," a poem which de-

serves quotation in full because it is unique in the verse annals of the inns and taverns of old Paris.

“ A street there is in Paris famous,
For which no rhyme our language yields,
Rue Neuve des Petits Champs its name is —
The New Street of the Little Fields.
And here’s an inn, not rich and splendid,
But still in comfortable case;
The which in youth I oft attended,
To eat a bowl of Bouillabaisse.

“ This Bouillabaisse a noble dish is —
A sort of soup or broth, or brew,
Or hotchpotch of all sorts of fishes,
That Greenwich never could outdo;
Green herbs, red peppers, mussels, saffron,
Soles, onions, garlic, roach, and dace;
All these you eat at Terre’s tavern,
In that one dish of Bouillabaisse.

“ Indeed, a rich and savoury stew ’tis;
And true philosophers, methinks,
Who love all sorts of natural beauties,
Should love good victuals and good drinks
And Cordelier or Benedictine
Might, gladly, sure, his lot embrace,
Nor find a fast-day too afflicting,
Which served him up a Bouillabaisse.

“ I wonder if the house still there is?
Yes, here the lamp is, as before;
The smiling red-cheeked *écaillère* is
Still opening oysters at the door.

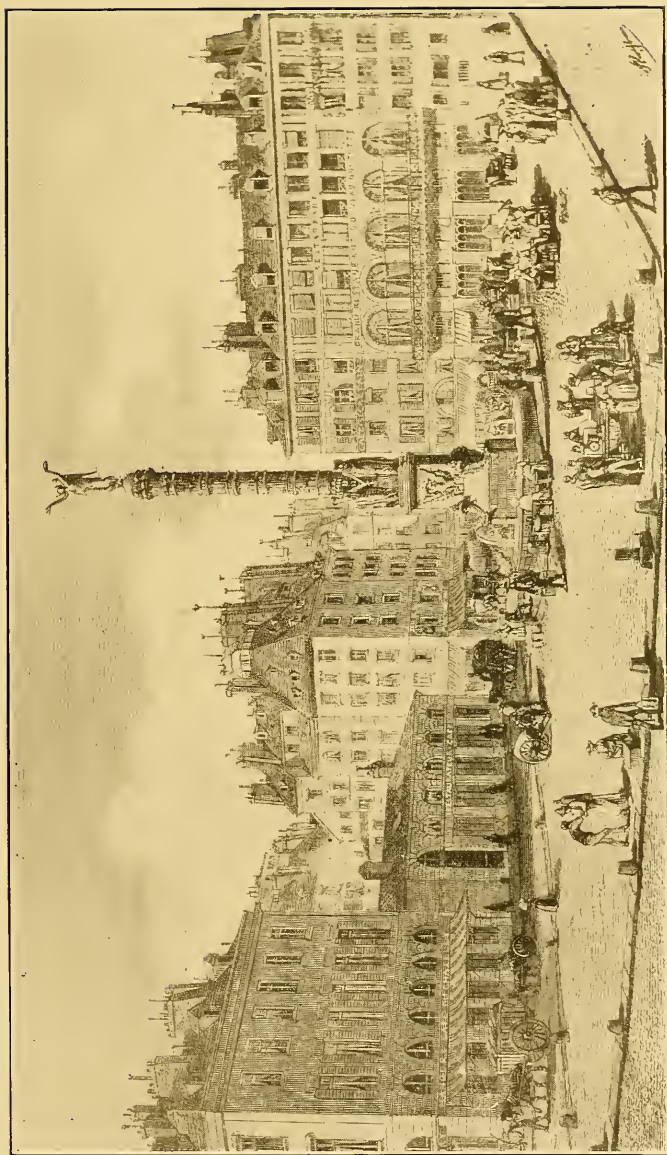
Is Terre still alive and able?
 I recollect his droll grimace:
 He'd come and smile before your table,
 And hope you liked your Bouillabaisse.

"We enter — nothing's changed or older.
 'How's Monsieur Terre, waiter, pray?'
 The waiter stares, and shrugs his shoulder —
 'Monsieur is dead this many a day.'
 'It is the lot of saint and sinner,
 So honest Terre's run his race.'
 'What will Monsieur require for dinner?'
 'Say, do you still cook Bouillabaisse?'

"'Oh, oui, Monsieur' 's the waiter's answer;
 'Quel vin Monsieur desire-t-il?'
 'Tell me a good one.' — 'That I can, Sir:
 The Chambertin with yellow seal.'
 'So Terre's gone,' I say, and sink in
 My old accustom'd corner place;
 'He's done with feasting and with drinking,
 With Burgundy and Bouillabaisse.'

"My old accustom'd corner here is,
 The table still is in the nook;
 Ah! vanish'd many a busy year is
 This well-known chair since last I took.
 When first I saw ye, *cari luoghi*,
 I'd scarce a beard upon my face,
 And now a grizzled, grim old foggy,
 I sit and wait for Bouillabaisse.

"Where are you, old companions trusty
 Of early days here met to dine?
 Come, waiter! quick, a flagon crusty —
 I'll pledge them in the good old wine.



EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY CAFÉS ON THE PLACE DU CHÂTELET.

The kind old voices and old faces
My memory can quick retrace;
Around the board they take their places
And share the wine and Bouillabaisse.

“ There’s Jack has made a wondrous marriage;
There’s laughing Tom is laughing yet;
There’s brave Augustus drives his carriage;
There’s poor old Fred in the *Gazette*;
On James’s head the grass is growing:
Good Lord! the world has wagged apace
Since here we set the Claret flowing,
And drank, and ate the Bouillabaisse.

“ Ah me! how quick the days are fitting!
I mind me of a time that’s gone,
When here I’d sit, as now I’m sitting,
In this same place — but not alone.
A fair young form was nestled near me,
A dear, dear face looked fondly up,
And sweetly spoke and smiled to cheer me
— There’s no one now to cheer my cup.

“ I drink it as the Fates ordain it.
Come, fill it, and have done with rhymes:
Fill up the lonely glass, and drain it
In memory of dear old times.
Welcome the wine, whate’er the seal is;
And sit you down and say your grace
With thankful heart, whate’er the meal is.
— Here comes the smoking Bouillabaisse! ”

To return for a little to the Grands Boulevards. From the Place de la République to the Place de la Madeleine there are scattered other cafés or memories of cafés which have figured more or less notably in the history of Paris. There is Maire’s, for ex-

ample, in the Boulevard St. Denis, which dates back to an unpretentious origin. "Ah me!" sighed Jules de Goncourt, "about the year '50, in the days when Maire was a common wine-seller, possessing behind his zinc counter only one tiny room, where, by dint of squeezing, you could get in six people, and old Father Maire did his own waiting, the food was served on real plate to those whose culinary taste was worth consideration." And then the diarist summoned up the memories of the haricot mutton, the truffled macaroni, and the splendid minor Burgundy from the cellars of Louis Philippe which had once given him such palatable delight. Less than a decade was sufficient to change all that, and few patrons of the restaurant to-day have any notion of its modest origin and early glories of cuisine.

For those whose memory can stretch back a generation or so, the Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle recalls a unique experiment. The Café Littéraire was an attempt to combine the pursuit of knowledge and the pursuit of pleasure at the cost of one investment. The footnote of the menu provided the explanation. "Every customer," it read, "spending a franc in this establishment is entitled to one volume of any work, to be selected at will from our vast collection; or in that proportion up to the largest sum he may expend." The café, in short, was a brave attempt to popularize literature on lines which have since been applied so successfully to pounds of tea or

bundles of cigars. To accumulate a respectable library of classics and at the same time eat so many meals, or drink so many cups of coffee, or play so many games of billiards, promised a royal and easy road to knowledge. The establishment was planned and appointed on a palatial scale, and in the vestibule the client was greeted by a waiter and a sub-editor, each of whom proffered his bill of fare. After a dinner or a game of billiards, the customer was presented with book vouchers equal to the amount he had expended, which were duly exchanged for the volumes most to that customer's taste. For a time the scheme was exceedingly popular, but at last the novelty wore off and the Literary Café had to close its doors.

Further west, the Boulevard Montmartre revives the memory of that Café Madrid which had fame thrust upon it in such a singular manner. According to Daudet, it was because Carjat and other young lyricals came to the conclusion that the absinthe of the Café des Variétés tasted of straw that they crossed the road and hung up their lyres and hats in the Café Madrid. Prior to that event the café had been merely a large, "rather melancholy tavern, with faded divans and clouded mirrors," haunted by a few Spaniards and littered with some old numbers of "Iberia." But the advent of Carjat and his friends effected a startling change. The hidalgos fled, but Carjat took up his position near the

café window and was so successful in harpooning the passers-by that the Café Madrid quickly became the fashionable literary drinking-place.

\ Albert Vandam knew the Café Madrid, but chiefly as one of the early haunts of Gambetta. Daudet, however, explains that at first the atmosphere of the resort was literary and only gradually changed to a political flavour. He has left some vivid pen portraits of its most famous patrons: Jules Vallès, "his nose in his absinthe, joked, sneered, spied on others from the corner of his eyes, and watched the café, seeking types for his book on 'Refractories;'" the painter Courbet, "conventional peasant, puffy with pride and beer;" Paschal Grousset, "a pretty little gentleman, gloved, pomatumed, and curled with tongs, having, both for speech and writing, that deplorable gift which is called facility;" Delescluze, "nervous and high-strung as an Arab steed." All these, however, were powerless to avert the change which came over the place as soon as Gambetta was caught by the industrious Carjat. He and others of like mind quickly established themselves in their own corner of the café and from that corner there radiated an influence which at length dominated the entire establishment. "Of the men of letters of the first period," said Daudet, "some, like Banville, Babou, Monselet, had fled, frightened away by the stupid racket; others were dead, such as Baudelaire, Delvan, and Charles Bataille. Some,

like Castagnary and Carjat himself, had gone over to Gambetta. Politics had evidently seized upon all the tables."

But that was not the worst. By and by Rochefort descended upon the Café Madrid and founded the Marseillaise cotery. "Then a cloud rained down upon us of students, old and pretentious, improvised journalists, without wit, without spelling, as ignorant of Paris as Patagonians, children with beards, who thought themselves called upon to regenerate the world, pedants of republicanism, all wearing waistcoats *à la* Robespierre, cravats *à la* Saint-Just—the Raoul Rigaults, the Tridons, the youth of the Schools who had no youth and no scholarship, did not love to laugh, and were sulky and savage; celebrities of Belleville, such as the famous planner of the club of things, pawn-heads, greasy collars, greasy hair; and all the cracked-brains, the trainers of snails, the saviours of the people, all the discontented, all the good-for-nothings, all the idlers, the incapables." All this was less endurable than straw-flavoured absinthe. So the true lyricals reached for their hats and lyres once more and sought a quieter haven elsewhere.

Of the Café de la Paix in the Boulevard des Capucines there is little to record save that it was the favourite resort of the Imperialists of the Second Empire and much haunted by the spies of the opposite party; while of the Durand, in the Place de la

Madeleine, the final chapter has been enacted while these pages are being written. That restaurant has had an unusual career. In its early days it was in high favour among economical parents who used to dine there with their children on their "days out" from school because it was "so cheap," but after the time of the Commune it aspired to rank with such no-priced-menu establishments as the Café Anglais and the Café Riche. The Durand, indeed, acquired the habit of high prices during the siege of Paris, as witness a bill for seventy-one francs for a breakfast for two, and found it so seductive that it became second nature. It had its Gambetta and Boulanger traditions, and its wine cellar was supposed to hold stores of precious vintages rescued from the Tuileries in the fire of forty years ago, but these were not sufficient to save it from that mortality which has overtaken so many famous haunts of the Empire.

Among the many Parisian cafés which have disappeared but have attained immortality in the annals of gourmandism or in the pages of fiction a distinguished place belongs to the Rocher de Cancale. More than a century ago it figured in the "Almanach des Gourmands" as a "public-house" celebrated for its oysters, but at the time Balzac wrote "La Cousine Bette" it had attained an European fame. And that it was in great favour among high-living Parisians is amply demonstrated

by Carabine stipulating the holding in its salons of the dinner which was designed to clear up the mystery as to whether Combabus had or had not a mistress. The setting was worthy of the occasion: the handsomest room in the restaurant where all Europe had dined, all the more dazzling by that splendid service of plate which had been made expressly for entertainments "where vanity pays the bill in bank-notes." And the guests fitted into the picture: Combabus himself, he of the "ineffable waistcoats," and spotless patent-leather boots; and Carabine, with her unrivalled shoulders and throat as round as though turned in a lathe; and Jenny Cadine, in a dress of incredible splendour; and Cydalise, with her distracting youthfulness "that might have stirred the senses of a dying man;" and Josépha, in her rich velvet gown and eleven rows of pearls on each arm.

Without entering into full details, Balzac conveys the impression of a meal suggestive of the resources of the Rock of Cancale. "Oysters appeared at seven o'clock; at eight they were drinking iced champagne. Every one is familiar with the bill of fare of such a banquet. By nine o'clock they were talking as people talk after forty-two bottles of various wines, drunk by fourteen people. Of all the party, the only one affected by the heady atmosphere was Cydalise, who was humming a tune. None of the party, with the exception of the poor

country girl, had lost their reason; the drinkers and the women were the experienced *élite* of the society that sups. Their wits were bright, their eyes glistened, but with no loss of intelligence, though the talk drifted into satire, anecdote, and gossip." But Balzac's report of the conversation probably did more than justice to the talk common in the salons of the restaurant, even though its blend of slang and cool cynicism may have been a faithful reflection of its usual trend.

While Balzac was penning the history of that sumptuous banquet Henry Murger was living through the experiences which enabled him to portray a type of café life far removed from that of the luxurious Rock of Cancale. The Café Momus, which stood in the gloomy Rue des Prêtres Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, has long given place to a commercial building of a most mundane character, but will live for many a year in the pages of "Scènes de la Vie de Bohême," as well as in the annals continued by Champfleury. The four Bohemians, Rodolphe and Schaunard, and Marcel and Colline, with their attendant divinities, were not the only notable patrons of the café. Schanne, the prototype of Schaunard, has told us that the almost daily frequenters also included, in addition to Champfleury, André Thomas, Monselet, Jean Journet, Gustave Mathieu, Pierre Dupont, Baudelaire, Gérard de Nerval, and occasionally Arsène Houssaye.



THE CAFÉ MOMUS.

Yet it is of the Bohemians themselves the pilgrim thinks most when passing the building which now stands on the site of their café, and of the lively doings and sparse meals in which they participated. Nothing sums up the various scenes so vividly as the famous formal statement made by the landlord of the house, with its indictment of Rodolphe for carrying off all the newspapers to his own room and also compelling the said landlord to subscribe to "The Beaver." Then there was the charge that Colline and Rodolphe sought relaxation from their intellectual labours by playing backgammon from ten in the morning until midnight, oblivious that the café had but one backgammon-board. And Marcel so far forgot that the café was a public place as to bring thither his painter's equipment and even send for models of a type likely to shock other frequenters of the house. But the gravest charge of all, and no doubt the most well-founded, was that "not content with being very poor customers, these gentlemen have tried to be still more economical. Under pretence of having discovered the mocha of the establishment in improper intercourse with chicory, they have brought a lamp with spirits of wine, and make their own coffee, sweetening it with their own sugar; all of which is an insult to the establishment." And the irregular influence of the Bohemians had so corrupted the morals of Bergami, the whiskered waiter, that he had addressed to the

mistress of the house a piece of poetry of a warmly amorous nature.

Even Murger did not tell all the history of the Café Momus. There were practical jokes enacted within its modest salons and tragedies begun there which find no place in his pages. It is true the historian of Bohemianism touches now and then a poignant note of pathos, but the truth was even more pathetic. He might have told of many frequenters of the café whose life went out in tragic suicide or violent death; of the insanity and self-destruction of Charles Barbara, or Musette's sailing away for Marseilles and finding a sea-grave in the Mediterranean. Most pitiful of all, perhaps, was the case of Espérance Blanchon, who, his portrait painted and despatched to his mother, sought surcease from the burden of life at the bottom of a lonely pond. These are indeed memories in lurid contrast with the visions of wealth, beauty, and dissipation recalled by Balzac, but no chronicle of the festive life of Paris should pass them by.

Almost as Bohemian, though of a more artistic nature and minus that stress of poverty which bore so heavily upon Murger and his friends, are the memories recalled by the Café Guerbois near the Rue de St. Petersbourg. That was the rallying-ground of the Impressionists. It has already been noted that Edouard Manet did not air his art here-sies at Tortoni's; indeed, for many years he had

little need to discuss his theories in the chief haunts of the boulevards; his pictures had so violated the æsthetic canons of the day that when he was seen on the streets people turned round to gaze at him, and his advent at a fashionable café created a general murmur of uncomplimentary comment.

All this jarred upon the sensitive and refined nature of Manet. He must often have wished he had continued his career as a sailor, which, if it did nothing else, did provide him with an opportunity to paint as he liked without pandering to the academic tastes of Salon juries. For, on his one voyage, it became necessary to re-colour a cargo of Dutch cheese which had deteriorated in the sea air, and the task fell to Manet, who, in later years, delighted to relate how he had restored those cheeses to their proper tint. But, for many years, he found it impossible to repeat by his pictures the satisfaction he had given the captain of his ship. As a painter he was regarded by critics and public alike as a pariah and became the butt of caricature and witticism. At last, however, he won a few disciples to his side, and the question arose as to how they could best keep in touch with each other. This created a desire for regular meetings, and, as Manet's studio was not suitable for a rendezvous, the Café Guerbois, a spacious and comfortable establishment, was chosen for the purpose. Here, then, for some four or five years, the Impressionists and their literary

friends of allied tastes regularly met to confirm each other in the despised gospel of realism. The group was gradually enlarged by the inclusion of artists who were not altogether Impressionists but who were sympathetic towards a new point of view. The men of letters included Zola, Cladel, Vignaud, Babou, and Burty, the three latter being most faithful in their attendance. By and by the artists and writers invited many of their friends and acquaintances to the café, with the result that on certain evenings its spacious salons were uncomfortably crowded. "Manet," says Théodore Duret, the historian of the Impressionists, "was the dominating figure; with his animation, his flashing wit, his sound judgment on matters of art, he gave the tone to the discussions. Moreover, as an artist who had suffered persecution, who had been expelled from the Salons, and excommunicated by the representatives of official art, he was naturally marked out for the place of leadership among a group of men whose one common feature, in art and literature, was the spirit of revolt." Hence the Café Guerbois has a distinguished place among those public resorts which have been associated with the mental revolutions having their origin in the French capital.

One of Manet's greatest offences was the introduction of a black cat into his "Olympia" picture. The subject of that canvas was a nude woman reclining on a bed, the high tones of which were ac-

centuated by the negress who is handing her mistress a large bouquet, and — by a black cat perched with arched back on a corner of the bed. Everything was forgiven except the cat; it was elected as the special object of criticism and for a long time all Paris was agitated over that unfortunate animal. Now, perhaps, it was the recollection of that uproar which was the determining motive with Rodolphe Salis when he cast around for a name for that *cabaret artistique* which he decided to open on the Rue Victor Massé at Montmartre. The Chat Noir was, at any rate, the designation chosen for that pioneer of those blends of the café-concert and the café-brasserie which have since become so common and so popular on Montmartre.

None of the successors of the Chat Noir has attained anything like the fame of the original. M. Salis, although a failure as poet and painter, had a rare gift in catering for literary Bohemians. From being an undistinguished wine-shop, the resort of a few unappreciated poets and painters of Montmartre, the Chat Noir suddenly developed into one of the sights of Paris. The primary cause of this transformation must be found in that flash of inspiration which prompted M. Salis to fit up his establishment with quasi-antique properties, not forgetting a liberal supply of drinking-glasses, which were reputed to have been used by Villon, Voiture, and other distinguished Bohemians of ear-

lier ages. Nor was that all: the waiters of the establishment were clad in imitations of the green-sprigged frock-coat sacred to the Academy, while the large gesturing and voluble Salis was in the habit of welcoming his guests with such phrases as, "Montmartre, the brains of Paris, is proud to clasp its sons to her bosom." When, to these novel attractions, were added the shadow dancers of Caran d'Ache, the piano extravagances of Tinchant, and the Pierrot of Willette, the vogue of the Chat Noir was fully established and the house ran a prosperous course for nearly twenty years. But, as with so many other experiments in Paris, the novelty wore off at last, and now nothing is left of the Chat Noir save its crudely painted sign-board of a black cat with saucer-like eyes which has found a home in the Musée Carnavalet.

Numerous other cafés have made a fleeting appearance in the annals of old Paris, such as the Turkish café whose marble tables were pressed into service for the dead bodies of the victims of Fieschi's infernal machine, or the Burgundy Vintage restaurant where Gallois, knife in hand, gave the significant toast of "To Louis Philippe!" but they all are represented in the types already described — types which are sufficient to illustrate how the descendants of the Café Procope reflected the life of Paris in all its aspects.

CHAPTER VI

THE SALONS

IN addition to its inns and taverns and cafés, Paris could, for more than two centuries, boast the possession of an institution which has no parallel in the social life of any other capital. This, of course, was the Salon, which, among the more exclusive classes of the community, was, in a sense, the counterpart first of the literary tavern, such as the Pomme de Pin, and then of the literary café. The Salon also occupies an important position in that social evolution of old Paris which finally had issue in the foundation of the club. Not in the seventeenth century, nor even by the middle of the eighteenth was the Parisian ripe for the club as a distinct institution; Bolingbroke was made aware of that fact by his failure to found a club for men, and years earlier Mlle. de Scudéry had explained why coteries restricted to her own sex were foredoomed to ineptitude. "Whoever," she said, "should write all that was said by fifteen or twenty women together would make the worst book in the world, even if some of them were women of intelligence. But if a man should enter, a single one, and

not even a man of distinction, the same conversation would suddenly become more *spirituelle* and more agreeable." No doubt that explains why some of the salon mistresses had scanty hospitality for members of their own sex.

Prodigious ingenuity has been displayed in attempts to explain why the salon never took root in England and why every effort to establish it on American soil must prove abortive. It is not, as has been suggested, the ubiquity of the newspapers, or the lack of a leisured class, or the absence of the gift of being able to think aloud gracefully, but rather that neither the English nor the American temperament is given to posing. No doubt the popularity of the inn and then the café may be partially accounted for by the social bent of the French genius, but an even more important factor may be found in the Gallic weakness for attitudinizing. And neither the inn nor the café provided such an unrivalled stage for the poser as the salon in its most sumptuous days; it furnished an uniquely effective background for people who, in Horace Walpole's illuminating phrase, lived "in perpetual opera."

Perhaps, also, too much has been affirmed as to the supposedly definite purpose for which the salon was founded. The impression left by some accounts is that the charter of that institution was from the first as sharply defined as the command-

ments given to Moses on Sinai. This is to impute to inchoate origins the precision taught by a comparative study of results; far wiser is it to remember that the salon, like Topsy, just "grewed."

In tracing the early stages of that growth it may be helpful to remember that at the opening of the seventeenth century the patricians of Paris would have shuddered at the thought of frequenting such resorts as the Pomme de Pin. It has been shown that a stranger, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, concluded it was beneath his dignity to visit even the heir to the British throne in an inn, and it is significant that the early records of the literary inns and taverns of Paris are practically barren of reference to the nobles of the time. Henry IV may have been something of a democrat and sincere in his sympathy with the poorer classes, but such inclinations were not shared by the members of his court. And yet many among his courtiers were not indifferent to the new spirit in the air — an inquiring spirit which had been created but not satisfied by the Renaissance.

Altogether, then, the times were ripe for such an experiment as that made by the Marquise de Rambouillet in the first decade of the seventeenth century. Born in 1588, Catherine de Vivonne, daughter and heiress of the Marquis de Pisani, was still but a girl when she was married to Charles d'Angennes, afterwards Marquis de Rambouillet. A brief expe-

rience of the court of Henry IV was sufficient to wean her from such pleasures. Taking its tone from the somewhat boisterous manners and sensual inclinations of the king, that court, with its atmosphere of intrigue and immorality, did not appeal to the refined temperament of the young marquise, and hence, about 1607, after the birth of her daughter Julie, she decided to withdraw from the royal circle and seek social happiness in the companionship of such friends of kindred spirit as she could gather round her in her own home.

Such was the origin of that salon which has made the Hôtel de Rambouillet so famous in the annals of old Paris. The mansion, which stood near the Palais Royal on the Rue St. Thomas-du-Louvre, was swept away many years ago, the present Grands Magasins du Louvre occupying a part of its site. At the beginning of her experiment the marquise had the house rearranged for the receptions she had in view, and when it was re-built in 1618 she was able to still further perfect her plans by providing several suites of private rooms in addition to the one stately apartment for general gatherings. In all these doings the Marquis de Rambouillet is but a shadowy figure, although it is recorded that to the end of his days he "loved his wife always as a lover." That is an exception in the history of the salon to be noted with gratitude; too many of the presiding ladies of later generations made either

unhappy marriages or regarded their wedding vows as the lightest of their obligations.

Without crediting the founder of the first salon, the "cradle of polished society," with that fixed and detailed programme which is so often attributed to her, it may be presumed that the Marquise de Rambouillet was careful from the first to include in her circle none save those from whom she might anticipate sensible conversation and refined manners. As much as that may be inferred from her own character. She was, is the testimony of one witness, "a model of courtesy, wisdom, knowledge, and sweetness;" amiable and gracious, reported another, she corrected the bad customs of the age, "and taught politeness to all those of her time who frequented her house." Of the charms of her personal appearance there is the same unbroken praise, and as no portrait exists to challenge that eulogy it must be accepted as well founded. Her moral character, too, was unsullied; no calumny or scandal attaches to her name.

That the social manners of the early seventeenth century were susceptible of improvement may be inferred from many incidents recorded at that time, while it is equally well established that the language in common use was not over-refined. It was, then, a useful task the young marquise set herself in an attempt to improve both. And, at the outset, she had, in the matter of conversation, an unexpected

ally. This was Honoré d'Urfé, who published the first volume of his interminable "Astree" in 1610. That prodigious pastoral romance, of which Hallam remarked that one cause of its popularity may have been due to its soothing effect "when read in small portions before retiring to rest," fitted in exactly with a part of the programme of the first salon. D'Urfé depicted on a larger than life-size scale the humble and ever faithful lover, and adorned him with such courtly manners and high-sounding conversation that the hero of "Astree" seems to have been accepted on the spot as a model for the frequenters of the Hôtel de Rambouillet. But that, in time, wrought their undoing. Their abandonment of their baptismal names for the sugary names of romance, and their indulgence in the artificial rhapsodies of d'Urfé's pastoral dummies brought them at last under the lash of Molière's satire.

One great service, however, the Hôtel de Rambouillet did render; it provided a meeting-place where the man of letters was regarded as the equal of the noble or was at least able to meet him on common ground. No doubt many of the writers who were accorded the hospitality of the first salon, such as Saint-Amant for example, felt more at ease in such a resort as the Pomme de Pin and experienced greater happiness in the wine-cup companionship of boon comrades than in mingling with the fine dames and gallants of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, but it was

an immeasurable gain for them and their craft that they were as welcome in that mansion as the most blue-blooded aristocrat. The influence of the circle may have tended to triviality in some respects, and to the unworthy exaltation of qualities in prose and verse which had no enduring merit, but it was an advance to have even such a tribunal for the hall-marking of literature.

There, then, from time to time might have been met most of the great writers of the first half of the seventeenth century. The roll-call is a tribute to the Marquise de Rambouillet's catholic hospitality, for it includes the names of Voiture, Chapelain, Godeau, Benserade, Bossuet, Balzac, and Corneille, and of each some incident is recorded which is of value in attempting to re-picture the sayings and doings of that first salon.

Bossuet, for example, is the subject of a story which is illuminating in view of the copiousness of his famous orations and his habit of never writing out his sermons. He happened to be present, although but a youth of sixteen, at a gathering when an animated discussion arose as to the merits or demerits of extempore preaching, the upshot of which was that it was resolved to make a test of the matter there and then. So the youthful Bossuet was called upon to mount a temporary rostrum and deliver an impromptu discourse to the company, a task so much to his liking that he is said to have

held the attention of his audience until midnight and won from the ever-ready Voiture the encomium, "I have never heard any one preach so early and so late."

Voiture, so much admired by Pope —

"Ev'n rival Wits did Voiture's death deplore,
And the gay mourn'd who never mourn'd before;
The truest hearts for Voiture heav'd with sighs,
Voiture was wept by all the brightest Eyes" —

was a privileged member of the coterie. Sometimes his wit was a trial to the patricians; "if he were one of us, he would be insupportable," ejaculated one aristocrat; but his readiness for all emergencies, his *esprit*, to use the catch-word of the day, the nimbleness with which he could turn the conversation, or throw off a sonnet or an epigram, and, above all, the high regard in which he was held by Julie d'Angennes, the favourite daughter of the house, led to his being not only tolerated but even petted in that exclusive circle. Voiture, indeed, seems to have been the only poet who declined to contribute to that famous album of verse, the "Guirlande de Julie," by which the Marquis de Montausier urged his suit with the coy Julie; she called him her "dwarf king," and he may have had ambitions of his own. In any case, apparently he was not anxious for Julie to change her state, for she was his chief aider and abettor in carrying out those little comedies and other amusements which helped to re-

lieve the somewhat severe decorum of the Hôtel de Rambouillet.

That such entertainments, and even practical jokes, were indulged in occasionally does lighten the somewhat academic gloom of the first salon. There were evidently some in the circle who did not altogether aspire to the name of *précieuse*. Among such must be counted the lively young Duchesse de Longueville, who, after Chapelain had read his "La Pucelle," the pretentious work which ruined his reputation as a poet, candidly remarked that it was doubtless a very beautiful poem, "but also very tiresome." The literary verdicts of the Hôtel de Rambouillet were not always so discriminating. Corneille is said to have read many of his plays to the company, but in the case of the most famous, "Polyeucte," Voiture assured him that the opinion was adverse in spite of the praise indulged in his presence. That report weighed so much with the dramatist that he resolved to put the tragedy aside when an appeal from an actor led to its being submitted, with triumphal results, to a wiser audience.

Among the other habitués of the Rambouillet salon Jean de Balzac seems to have been a prominent figure, and Godeau, too, until he was hurried off to a bishopric. Nor should the poet Benserade be forgotten, the author of that Job sonnet which, as compared with the merits of Voiture's *Urania*

sonnet, long divided the wits of Paris into hostile camps. One of Benserade's poems was translated by Dr. Johnson; it is typical of the trifles which won so much applause in the *précieuse* circles:

“ In bed we laugh, in bed we cry,
And born in bed, in bed we die;
The near approach a bed may show
Of human bliss to human woe.”

Balzac, on the other hand, was esteemed for his prose, for those high-flown letters which were so prized in select circles that he was pestered by countless correspondents, all anxious to secure in reply an original example of his epistolary genius. “ I am harassed, I am teased to death,” he exclaimed; “ I am in arrears to crowned heads.” This was flattering, but also a heavy tax on a man of such delicate health that in his thirtieth year he said he was as old as his father and “ as much decayed as a ship after her third voyage to the Indies.”

All things considered, however, the most important habitué of the Hôtel de Rambouillet was not a man but a woman, namely, Madeleine de Scudéry, for she became the historian of the circle and the perpetuator of its traditions. Forgotten to-day by all save the student of the literary life of old Paris, and in that respect a notable illustration of that law of compensation which refuses posterior fame to

those who have basked in contemporary reputation, Mlle. de Scudéry seems to have been the earliest, as she certainly was the most prolific blue-stocking of France. One of her friends described her as "destined by Providence to blacken paper, for she sweat ink from every pore." Nature, it seems, also equipped her from her earliest years with a formidable facility for conversation, and as increase of appetite grew by what it fed on, her brother, so the story runs, had to resort to the drastic expedient of locking her in a room away from her friends each day until she had accomplished a given task of writing. These two gifts, a ready tongue and a facile pen, made her a desirable acquisition to the Rambouillet circle.

And Mlle. de Scudéry found in that company a rare wealth of material susceptible of being turned into "copy." She had already written one novel, a mere trifle of four volumes, when the Hôtel de Rambouillet and its frequenters suggested a theme more commensurate with her fecund gifts. So she set to work on her romance of "Le Grand Cyrus," and, proceeding at the rate of two instalments a year, eventually wrote "finis" to a production which extended to ten volumes! Two other novels remained to be penned, one in eight and one in ten volumes, so that Mlle. de Scudéry's four romances extended to no fewer than thirty-two volumes! And those thirty-two volumes were once thought all too

few. No popular novelist of modern times has enjoyed more incense than Mlle. de Scudéry. She was adored by the clergy. "I find," wrote one pulpit orator, "so much in your works calculated to reform the world, that, in the sermons I am now preparing for the court, you will often be on my table by the side of St. Augustine and St. Bernard." Nay, kings and queens delighted to honour her, for Louis XIV provided her with a pension and Christina of Sweden sent her her portrait.

If, awakened to curiosity by these unimpeachable testimonials, "Le Grand Cyrus" is rescued for a moment from the dusty oblivion of the top bookshelf, it will be found that its countless pages teem with characters bearing Persian or Babylonian names, and that copious space is devoted to a place called the "Hôtel Cléomire" and what happened within its walls. These subterfuges, however, are the thinnest of disguises; the "Hôtel Cléomire" is the Hôtel de Rambouillet, and the Persians and Babylonians are merely Parisians of the seventeenth century. Here, then, in these long-neglected pages, may be read the history of the first salon, the interminable chronicle of its wearisome affectation and pedantic gallantry, the details of that protracted course of wooing so well illustrated by the obstinate Julie, and the code of that ritual of ceremony which made a bed a throne.

All that artificial life was, however, so much to

the taste of Mlle. de Scudéry that when, through the death of the marquise, the Rambouillet salon was closed, she made an effort to continue its traditions under her own roof. Her reunions, called "Same-dis," because they were held each Saturday, were popular for some years but attracted men of letters rather than aristocrats. Yet her list of visitors was one of which she might have been proud, for it included Madame de Sévigné, Madame de La Fayette, Madame Scarron, the Duke of Rochefoucauld, Paul Pellison, and Valentin Conrart, not to mention many other aristocrats and wits who, though noted in their day, are now nothing but names. Of all these Pellison was the most devoted adherent, for his close friendship with Mlle. de Scudéry endured till death. There was so perfect an understanding between the two that when Pellison became disfigured by small-pox Mlle. de Scudéry told him he had abused the common liberty of men to be ugly. Perhaps they might have married had not the woman in the case held such decided views as to the dangers of wedded bonds. "I know," she admitted, "that there are many admirable men who are worthy all my esteem and who can retain my friendship, but as soon as I think of them as husbands I regard them as masters, and so liable to become tyrants that I must hate them from that moment." Pellison, then, was never more than a friend, but a friend whom she desired to see or hear from every day.

But he deserves remembrance also as the historian of Mlle. de Scudéry's salon and the chronicler of the letters and poems read at its gatherings. He tells how one member of the circle would recite four verses and another a dozen, and adds: "All this is done gaily and without effort. No one bites his nails, or stops laughing and talking. There are challenges, responses, repetitions, attacks, repartees. The pen passes from hand to hand, and the hand does not keep pace with the mind." Over all those literary contests, however, there ever brooded an atmosphere of decorum, a decorum as proper as that which permeates the long-winded romances of the mistress of the salon.

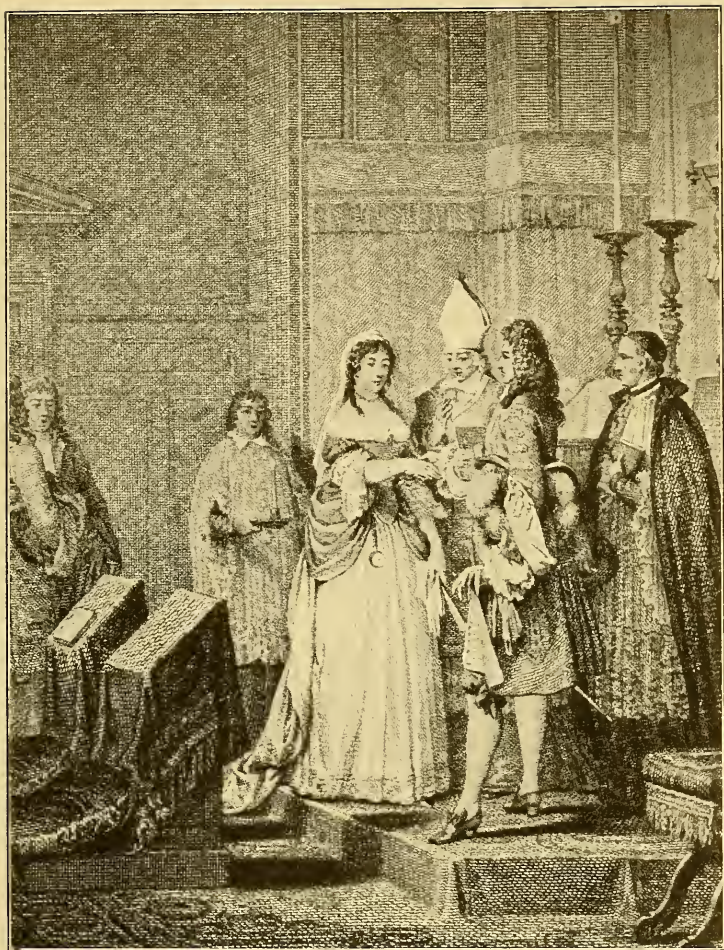
Those traditions of blameless propriety were not broken by that Marquise de Sévigné who held her salon in that Hôtel de Carnavalet which still adorns Paris as the Musée Carnavalet. Educated by Jean Chapelain and Gilles Ménage, it would have been surprising had she not proved something of a literary prodigy, but it was her early widowhood and absorbing love for her daughter which were the occasion of the development of that epistolary genius which has given her an enviable place in literature. Her salon in Paris, then, naturally took a flavour of letters, and was most free in its hospitality to such writers as La Rochefoucauld, Corneille, Retz, Boileau, and Racine. Chief among her women friends was Madame de La Fayette, who once nursed an

ambition to found a popular salon but finally contented herself with a more exclusive circle, which she entertained in that stately mansion which yet stands close to the Luxembourg. The favoured guests of Mme. de La Fayette included La Fontaine, the Prince de Condé, the Cardinal de Retz, and, above all, La Rochefoucauld, who found in that tranquil society his most effectual refuge from the melancholy which prompted the penning of his famous "Maxims." No doubt there was at times much witty or wise conversation, but as the hostess and the most favoured guest were both somewhat hypochondriacal and often in ill health the salon could not have been particularly cheerful. "Mme. de La Fayette is always languishing," wrote Mme. de Sévigné, "M. de La Rochefoucauld is always lame; we have conversation so sad that it seems as if there were nothing more to do but to bury us." And yet that languishing hostess was able to accomplish literary work far more enduring than that of the robust and prolific Mlle. de Scudéry.

Had there been any tendency to get out of hand shown by the frequenters of Mme. de La Fayette's salon, they would hardly have indulged such a propensity on those occasions when the widow of Paul Scarron joined the circle, as she frequently did. Thus far her career had been of a character which goes far to explain the sobriety of her temperament.

Françoise d'Aubigne was still but a child of sixteen when she became acquainted with the coarse and somewhat libertine Scarron, and elected to become his wife in preference to accepting his alternative to pay for her admission into a convent. Her steadying influence soon made itself felt in Scarron's home. Prior to her advent the gatherings there had not been distinguished for refinement or sobriety; with her reign over the house there was inaugurated a respect for the decencies of conversation and a restraint in the use of strong drink. And yet, such were her mental powers and gifts of entertaining conversation, the Scarron salon became more popular than ever among the wits of Paris. And when the picaresque writer died, she was able, by the continuance of his pension, not only to continue entertaining but also to frequent other literary reunions.

One result was that Mme. Scarron made the acquaintance of Mme. de Montespan, the mistress of Louis XIV, who, on the birth of her first child by the King, conceived the idea of entrusting its education to her new friend. Mme. Scarron accepted the task, and soon found ample employ in mothering that and the six other tokens of affection with which Mme. de Montespan favoured her royal lover. The sequel is well known — how Louis at last decided to have his natural children at court, how Mme. Scarron accompanied them and won the respect of the



THE MARRIAGE OF MME. DE MAINTENON TO LOUIS XIV.

king by her sterling qualities, how she was created the Marquise de Maintenon, and how at length Louis transferred his affections to the new marquise and in the end made her his wife. The supremacy of Mme. de Maintenon had an important result for the social life of Paris in the close of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries. Her serious nature gradually developed along religious lines until she acquired as great a reputation for piety as she had formerly enjoyed for *esprit*, and that change gave the finishing touch of dulness to a court which was already distinguished for its rigid etiquette. "There is little stirring here," wrote Matthew Prior from Paris when Mme. de Maintenon's power was at its height; "the King is at his prayers," he added; and a few weeks later he referred with scorn to the "damned dinner" he had eaten at Versailles and to the "melancholy and bigotry" of the court. That court had, indeed, become "an infirmary of morose invalids" presided over by an elderly woman who was in turn under the domination of the Jesuits.

Reaction was inevitable, of course. What had happened in England after the restoration of Charles II might have warned Mme. de Maintenon that sobriety of life can be carried too far. Such a lesson was ignored by herself and Louis alike, and hence when the king's protracted reign came at

last to an end and the chief power of the state passed into the hands of the Duke of Orleans as Regent there began a period which has never been equalled even in France for unrestrained debauchery. "All that we read in ancient historians," Alison wrote, "veiled in the decent obscurity of a learned language, of the orgies of ancient Babylon, was equalled, if not exceeded, by the nocturnal revels of the Regent Orleans." The incidents of those revels have been vividly described by one who witnessed them, St. Simon to wit, in these frank sentences: "At the suppers of the Regent, very strange society was assembled—his mistresses, opera-girls, frequently the Duchess de Berri, certain ladies of easy virtue, men whom he did not hesitate to name as *roués*, and others without name, but notorious for their wit and their profligacy. The fare was exquisite; and the guests, and the Prince himself, often aided the cooks in the preparation of it; and during the sittings, the characters of every one, their own acquaintances, the ministry as well as others, were discussed with fearful license. They drank much, and of the best vintages; they inflamed themselves; poured forth obscenities at the pitch of their voices and impieties to an equal degree; and, when satisfied with riot, and far gone in intoxication, they retired to sleep."

With such an example in high places, continued for nearly a decade, it is not surprising that the tone

of literary and social life in Paris underwent a marked change. The cult of the *précieuse* and all that it represented became the theme of relentless ridicule. Every refinement of life which had been an article of faith in the first salon was more honoured in the breach than the observance, and that reversal of the old order was accompanied by such a questioning of every accepted doctrine of faith and government as made the French Revolution inevitable.

Of course this spirit of license in thought and conduct re-acted upon the salons of Paris beside making its influence felt in the literary taverns and cafés. So far as the Regent himself was concerned, however, it must be recorded to his credit that he did not allow his mistresses to interfere in matters of state. This was soon discovered by Claudine de Tencin, who arrived in Paris shortly before the Duke of Orleans took up the reins of government. Educated in a convent and condemned by her father to the life of the cloister, that pleasure-loving woman found the religious life intolerable, and she so laid her plans and so shocked her superiors that at length she was given liberty to proceed to the capital. Once in Paris the quasi-nun speedily became the centre of a group of wits and *roués*, and in due time could count the Regent himself among the victims of her charms. That liaison, however, was of brief duration, for Orleans quickly ended the con-

nection when his mistress attempted to use her position for political ends.

Two years after her arrival in Paris Mme. de Tencin gave birth to a son, the issue of an amour with the Chevalier Destouches, who, the day after his birth, was abandoned on the steps of a church, to be adopted by a glazier and grow up into the famous philosopher d'Alembert. Another of her amours had a still more tragic issue, for when her lover La Fresnay discovered that he did not possess a monopoly of her favours he committed suicide in her presence. These experiences appear to have had a sobering effect, and Mme. de Tencin then conceived the idea of conducting a more reputable salon, to which she was able to attract Fontenelle and Montesquieu among her own countrymen and Chesterfield and Bolingbroke among Englishmen. That salon, indeed, became one of the most influential literary centres of Paris, with a strong tendency, as may be imagined from the character of its mistress, in favour of freedom of thought. And Mme. de Tencin was under no delusions as to what would be the issue of the unrestrained discussions over which she presided. "Unless God visibly interferes," she declared, "it is impossible that the state should not fall to pieces." She could foresee the issue of such attacks upon the existing order of things as those contained in the writings of Montesquieu, whose "*Esprit des Lois*" she thought so



JEAN BAPTISTE LE ROND D'ALEMBERT.

highly of, however, that she never wearied in her praise of the book and purchased many copies for distribution among her friends.

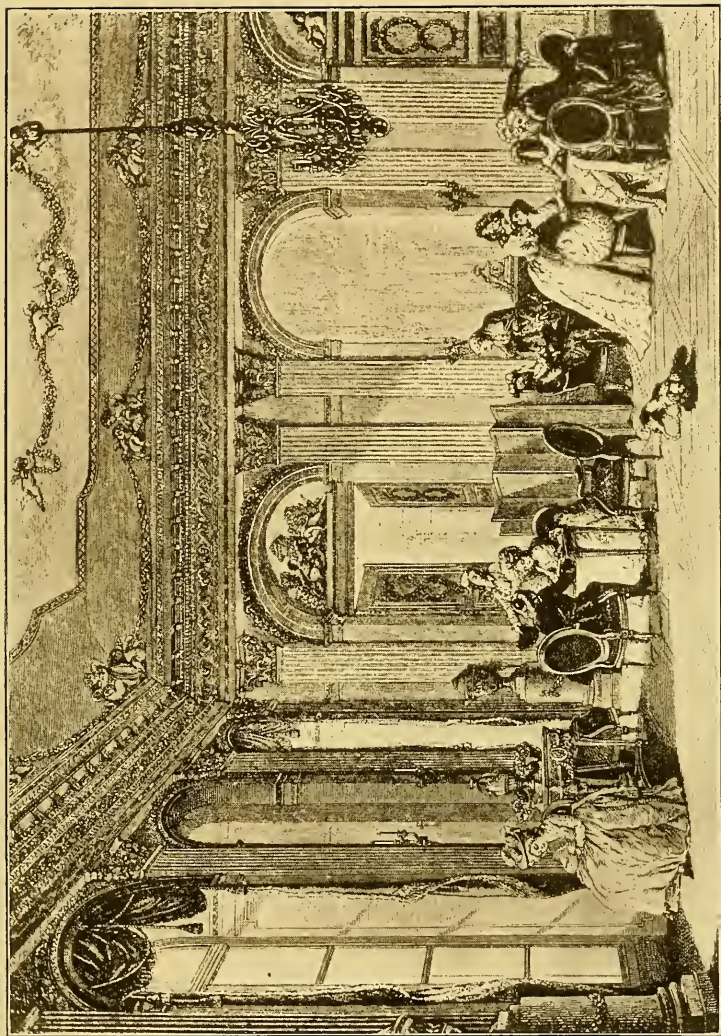
Animated discussion was the chief attraction of Mme. de Tencin's salon, as may be inferred from Marmontel's record of a gathering he attended. "I soon perceived," he wrote, "that the guests came there prepared to play their parts, and that their wish to shine did not always leave the conversation free to follow its easy and natural course. Every one tried to seize quickly and on the wing the moment to bring in his word, his story, his maxim, or to add his dash of light and sparkling wit; and, in order to do this opportunely, it was often rather far-fetched."

Later in the eighteenth century many of the salons in Paris became distinguished for their empty and frivolous amusements. They were the home of dandyism and idle scandal. The talk was commonplace or ill-natured; the occupations most affected were childish or effeminate. Poussinet's comedy, "*La Soirée à la Mode*," gives a satirical picture of the lackadaisical manners of the young men of the period. One scene depicted two maidens, Ismene and Cidalise, in a typical salon and represented them taking to embroidery and flounce trimming because they were tired of the game they had been playing and had exhausted all their scandal. At this juncture a lackey announces Monsieur le Marquis,

who, on entering, exclaims: "How delighted I am to find you at home, ladies! And what lovely work! How beautifully grouped those flowers are! And how even the threads of this embroidery seem to be! It is the work of the Graces and the fairies, or rather of you!" And then the visitor produces his own needles, and, after helping Cidalise with her embroidery, goes to the assistance of Ismene and her flounce.

(Sometimes the fad of the hour made the cutting out of pictures the fashionable amusement, and then all the guests of these trivial salons tried to out-rival each other in the art of using a pair of scissors, or competed for supremacy in pasting the pictures on screens, lampshades and boxes. Anon the fashion would veer to the making of charades and word-puzzles, and when these and similar futilities failed it became the mode for the salonites to vie with each other as to who could boast of the most severe attack of the "vapours," an imaginary malady of the unemployed which appears to have anticipated the modern complaint of "nerves."

But it must not be inferred that all the salons had deteriorated to such nugacity. Perhaps, indeed, the male embroiderers and the picture-pasters, and the victims of "vapours" are hardly worth remembrance in the history of the salon save as furnishing additional examples of that weakness for imitation which always seems to characterize the idle rich.



A SALON OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

The more serious traditions of the salon, then, were being continued at the same period by many famous women, such as Madame Geoffrin, Madame du Defand, Madame d'Epinaÿ, Julie de Lespinasse, and others.

Two of those women, the first and the last, served a notable apprenticeship in the salons of others before setting up a coterie of their own. Mme. Geoffrin received her training as the assistant of the notorious Mme. Tencin, who, according to Horace Walpole, advised her "never to refuse any man; for, though nine in ten should not care a farthing for you, the tenth may live to be a useful friend." By the time Walpole met Mme. Geoffrin in Paris in 1766 her position as the leader of her own salon, — which met in a mansion on the Rue St. Honoré still standing, — was firmly established, and consequently his sketch of her represents her when at the height of her influence. She was, he wrote, "an extraordinary woman, with more commonsense than I almost ever met with. Great quickness in observing characters, penetration in going to the bottom of them, and a pencil that never fails in a likeness — seldom a favourable one. She exacts and preserves, spite of her birth and their nonsensical prejudices about nobility, great court and attention. This she acquires by a thousand little arts and offices of friendship."

A more concise and yet exhaustive characteriza-

tion of Mme. Geoffrin and her salon cannot be imagined. She was of lowly birth but had married a wealthy manufacturer; her education was so scanty that when one of her friends proposed dedicating a grammar to her she ejaculated, "To me? Dedicate a grammar to me! Why, I don't even know how to spell." She had, however, remarkable gifts as a hostess, had learned much in Mme. de Tencin's salon, and was ambitious. Those qualities enabled her to conduct a salon which Sainte-Beuve praised as the most complete and best organized of the period and worthy of comparison with the Hôtel de Rambouillet. It was a dual salon; the Monday dinners were restricted to artists, the Wednesday dinners to men of letters. Hence it was more cosmopolitan than any of its predecessors, and seems to have been one of the first to extend its hospitality to distinguished foreigners. Mme. Geoffrin could boast, too, that her followers included the most notable men of her day, such as Fontenelle, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Grimm, Helvétius, Marivaux, Mairan, Marmontel, Hume, and Gibbon. Given such guests, the trend of the conversation may easily be divined; it was thoroughly typical of the questioning spirit of the age and wholly in harmony with those disrupting discussions which were going on in the Café Procope and other public haunts of the encyclopædists.

✓ Much the same atmosphere, plus a scrupulous re-

gard for the graces and refinements which were second nature to the old *noblesse*, prevailed in the salon of Mme. du Deffand. That remarkable woman, without doing violence to the traditions of her order, was as hospitable to new ideas as the bourgeoisie Mme. Geoffrin. Her tendency towards scepticism dated from the convent days of her girlhood. She could not esteem as sacred a doll which she had first known as a mere fashion doll because it had been re-dressed to represent the infant Jesus; and when a week's solitary confinement sustained on bread and water failed to give her the desired illusion she protested, "It does not depend upon me to believe or disbelieve." She never changed, for on her death-bed she implored that she might be spared all questions and reasons and sermons.

Perhaps, then, a certain cynicism was the predominant note of the discussions which took place in that old mansion which yet stands on the Rue des Quatre-Fils in the once fashionable Quartier du Marais. And yet Mme. du Deffand, for all her questioning spirit and her sad disillusionment in life, was not deficient in kindness. And that she had a personality of rare charm is beyond question. Montesquieu affirmed that he loved her with all his heart; Voltaire, too, declared "all that I can do is to love you with all my heart, as I have done for about fifty years;" and even Horace Walpole, although he did not make her acquaintance until she was very old

and stone blind, developed for Mme. du Deffand an affection such as no other woman inspired him with. "My dear old friend," he called her; she felt, he said, no difference between the spirits of twenty-three and seventy-three. "She makes songs," he added, "sings them, remembers all that ever were made; and having lived from the most agreeable to the most reasoning age, has all that was amiable in the last, all that is sensible in this, without the vanity of the former, or the pedant impertinence of the latter." She may have hated the philosophers, as Walpole asserted, but that aversion was probably due to their manners or to their adhesion to Mme. Geoffrin's salon, for she was not innocent of the feminine weakness of jealousy.

Besides, Mme. du Deffand could not forget that some of those philosophers were the frequenters of Julie de Lespinasse's salon and that the mistress of that coterie had once been her own assistant. Much sentiment has been expended in bewailing the sad fate of Mlle. de Lespinasse, but no convincing apology has ever been offered of her conduct towards the woman who gave her a home in Paris. She was the natural daughter of Mme. du Deffand's brother but seems to have been treated with none the less consideration on that account. "Come," Mme. du Deffand wrote, "come to be the happiness and consolation of my life." All she asked from her protégé was that she should be "without de-

ceit." But that was exactly the quality in which she failed. As Mme. du Deffand suffered from insomnia, she had acquired the habit of not rising until shortly before six o'clock, the hour at which she received, but Mlle. de Lespinasse prepared herself to welcome the guests an hour earlier and encouraged their attendance in her own room prior to the set gathering in another part of the mansion. As she had the advantage of youth, for she was but twenty-two as compared with her patron's fifty-seven years, and was, besides, attractive without being beautiful, and an accomplished hostess, the sequel may be imagined. Many of the guests, and notably d'Alembert, the favourite of Mme. du Deffand and who owed so much to her influence, grew into the habit of holding a preliminary salon in Mlle. de Lespinasse's apartment, and as this continued for some years it may, perhaps, have been natural that the joint-offenders should make common cause with Mlle. de Lespinasse when the deceit was discovered and she was obliged to seek a home elsewhere. Such, then, was the origin of Mlle. de Lespinasse's salon in the Rue St. Dominique, to which many of Mme. du Deffand's followers deserted.

Perhaps, however, there was no salon of the late eighteenth century in which the radical thinkers and writers were so much at home as in that of Mme. d'Epinay, who, it will be recalled, established

Rousseau at the famous hermitage and lived to regret her generosity. She found more steadfast friendship in Voltaire and Grimm and Diderot, and was sufficiently discerning to foresee what the results of their teaching would be. Unless, she prophesied, some radical alterations were made in the constitution of the nation, "the knowledge acquired by the people must sooner or later produce revolution." That prevision sums up the predominant influence of the salon in the second half of the eighteenth century; and when it is remembered that the discussions presided over by Mme. d'Epinay, Mme. Geoffrin, and Mlle. de Lespinasse dealt with subjects more removed every year from the trifling questions which had exercised the followers of the Marquise de Rambouillet, it will not seem strange that with the near approach of the Revolution the functions of the salon were usurped by the club.



MME. D'ÉPINAY.

CHAPTER VII

THE CLUBS

As with the café, Paris may be said to have copied the club from London, but at a much longer interval. The tardiness with which the latter institution was initiated was probably due to two causes: first, the unicity of the café or literary tavern in the French capital, and, secondly, the prevalence of the salon.

By the last quarter of the seventeenth century many of the coffee-houses of London had become the recognized resorts of extreme politicians, and their suppression was advocated on the plea that they were the meeting-places of idle men who arraigned “ the judgments and discretions of their governors, censured all their actions, and insinuated into the people a prejudice against them.” On that account even the easy-going Charles II was prevailed upon to issue a proclamation commanding the closing of such rendezvous of sedition, which proclamation, however, was rescinded almost as soon as issued. Hence the London coffee-houses continued to flourish as political clubs, and in the early decades of the eighteenth century were a power with which statesmen had to reckon.

All this goes far to explain the action of Henry

Saint-John, otherwise Viscount Bolingbroke, to which allusion was made in the opening sentences of the previous chapter. Not only was he, as an English politician, familiar with the idea of the club and conversant with its value as a weapon for intrigue and the dissemination of ideas, but he was also himself a club-founder. As Swift's "Journal to Stella" shows, Bolingbroke established the Brothers Club in London in the summer of 1711, one end of which was "to reward deserving persons with our interest and recommendation." That coterie, however, speedily took a political bent with a strong inclination to conviviality. When, then, the failure of his political fortunes prompted Bolingbroke to remove to Paris, it was but natural that he should have attempted to create in the French capital a replica of that club which he had established in London.

Apparently he had little difficulty in carrying his scheme into execution. One of his friends was President Hénault, and he agreed to allow the mezzanine of his house to be used as a meeting-place, which accounts for the club being named the *Entre sol*. Two other notable members were the Abbé Alary and the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, and the main topics of discussion were the political questions of the day, which were debated with a leaning towards innovation and in a spirit keenly critical of the abuses in the state. The Abbé de Saint-Pierre was the most

singular and original member of the club; now he would expound his radical views as to how titled aristocrats might render useful service to the nation, and on another occasion he, anticipating the humanitarianism of The Hague Conference, entertained his fellow members with an exposition of his scheme to bring about perpetual peace. The latter project he embodied in his book, "*Projet de Paix Perpétuelle*," a work which prompted a Dutch inn-keeper to christen his hostelry "*The Perpetual Peace*," and explain the name by a signboard which depicted a churchyard thickly strewn with graves. But other reforms not so visionary were debated at the *Entre sol Club*, and when this became known to Cardinal Fleury he intimated in a quiet but none the less resolute manner that its meetings had better cease. And so the first political and semi-literary club of Paris came to an end in 1731 after a brief existence of two or three years.

Half a century later, however, the conditions had changed. The encyclopædists and the salons had done their work. Besides, the increasing intercourse between London and Paris had done much to familiarize Frenchmen with the idea of the club and its social and political possibilities. That the club in the French capital assumed at the first a political character may be accounted for by the nature of the times. According to the testimony of the actor Fleury, clubs of various kinds had been established

in Paris several years prior to the outbreak of the Revolution but were transformed by that event into purely political reunions. "What delightful things," wrote the comedian in his memoirs, "were those clubs at their commencement! The term was new to French ears, and our ladies loved to pronounce it because it was foreign. The meetings themselves too were new and foreign, and for that reason they were eagerly adopted. Clubs became quite the rage, and they gave renewed brilliancy to our salons, whose lustre was beginning to be dimmed. They furnished new winter-quarters for fashionable conversation, which was dying of decline — not for want of aliment, but because its tone, which had been adopted under Louis XIV, had lasted through three whole reigns. It therefore required renovation. Yet, in changing the form of things, there is always a risk of changing their nature; and so it happened, that Parisian conversation, that lively queen of the drawing-room, was soon converted into a formal prude, who talked of nothing but principles, abuses, and constitutions. From that moment the character of the club was changed; it aimed at constituting itself a sort of tribunal of public opinion, and to justify this pretension, it enlisted under its banners that spirit of opposition which is innate with the Parisians."

While it was natural for the pleasure-loving actor to regret that the early clubs of Paris were so soon

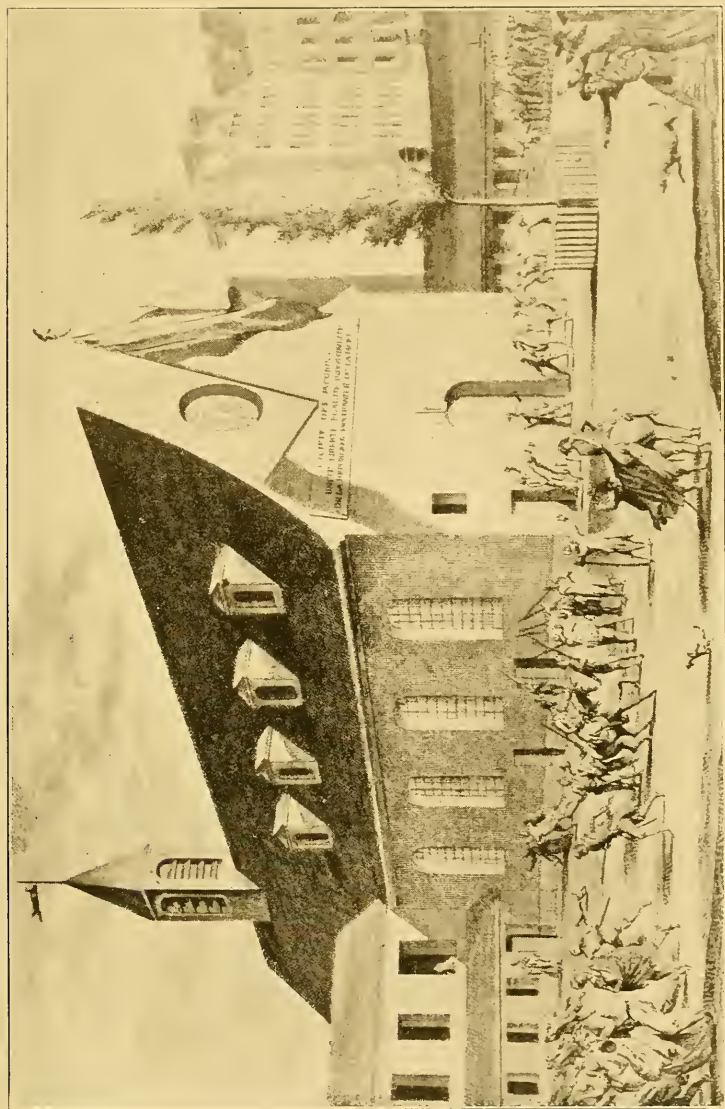
perverted to political uses, the student of history may find some compensation in the fact that that divergence from the purely social idea of the club enriched the history of that institution by some of its most remarkable chapters.

Not counting the abortive experiment of Bolingbroke, it seems that the earliest political club of Paris was that established about 1782 to further the interests of the Orleans family and especially the ambitions of the Duke himself, the notorious Philippe Égalité. This club, however, notwithstanding that its members included Mirabeau and Sieyès, was not of long endurance, and as its gatherings were secret little is known of its history.

Secrecy and poverty of annals cannot be charged against the famous Jacobins Club save with reference to the early stages of its history when it was known as the Breton Club. That society, as its name suggests, was founded by those deputies from Brittany who represented the determination of that province to continue holding its own parliament despite the royal edict suspending all such legislatures. The Bretons preferred the old order of things, and hence at the outset the club into which they formed themselves claimed the title of "the Friends of the Constitution." Their early proceedings are obscure, for the members were pledged by a solemn oath not to divulge what transpired at their meetings.

Only for a brief season was the organization known as the Breton Club. When the National Assembly was removed from Versailles to Paris in October, 1789, the club secured possession of the old Jacobins, or Dominican, monastery on the Rue St. Honoré, and thus acquired the name by which it is famous. Already its members included Mirabeau, Sieyès, Barnave, Pétion, the two Lameths, several liberal aristocrats, and Robespierre, who were later joined by St. Just, Danton, and Marat.

Early the following year a constitution was adopted. It provided for four secretaries, a treasurer, committees to control the administration and report on candidates for membership, and a president whose term of office was restricted to one month. The objects of the club were also defined. They were to include preliminary discussion of such matters as were likely to be brought before the National Assembly, support to all action tending to strengthen the constitution in harmony with legal authority such as did not clash with "the rights of man," and affiliation with other societies of a kindred nature. At first, then, strange as it may seem in the light of its subsequent history, the Jacobins Club was not committed to extreme measures. And admission to its membership was by no means easy. For one thing, the subscription was very high, and that restricted its constituency to men of wealth or well to do *bourgeois* such as Michel Gérard, that



MEETING - PLACE OF THE JACOBIENS CLUB.

peasant proprietor whose mother wit and country garb distinguished him from the rank and file. Gérard was exceedingly frank in his remarks. "When I first sat among you," he blurted out one day, "I heard so many beautiful speeches that I might have believed myself in heaven, had there not been so many lawyers present." And in one high-flown discussion he intervened with, "we have become involved in a rigmarole about 'the Rights of Man' of which I understand mighty little save that it is worth nothing." But Gérard did more than enliven the discussions of the Jacobins Club; he set the fashion; for his plaited hair and rural waistcoat became in time the mode among all ultra-Jacobins.

Perhaps the most suggestive thing in the history of the Jacobins Club is that while at the start its meetings were held in the old refectory of the monastery and then in the library, at last it became necessary to change the venue to the more spacious church. Those successive changes of meeting-place are not only eloquent of a growth in membership but also of a transformation in the spirit of the club. Robespierre and the more violent members, in short, gradually asserted themselves and acquired the control of the organization.

By far the most important outcome of the Robespierre ascendancy was the resolve to admit the public to the debates of the club. This innovation dated

from October, 1791, and had the inevitable result. The discussions attracted the worst elements of the population, degraded women and men of the lowest and even criminal type, such an audience, in fact, as would reserve its loudest plaudits for the most revolutionary sentiments. Of course this re-acted upon the speakers, most of whom had no higher ambition than to pose as a popular demagogue.

Unique, then, in the annals of clubdom were the scenes which transpired in that ancient church on the Rue St. Honoré. A picture has survived of the setting of those gatherings, penned by one who was an eye-witness. "The nave of the Jacobins Church is changed into a vast Circus, the seats of which mount up circularly like an amphitheatre to the very groin of the domed roof. A high Pyramid of black marble, built against one of the walls, which was formerly a funeral monument, has alone been left standing: it now serves as a back to the Office-bearers' Bureau. Here on an elevated platform sit President and Secretaries, behind and above them the white busts of Mirabeau, of Franklin, and various others, nay finally of Marat. Facing this is the Tribune, raised till it is midway between floor and groin of the dome, so that the speaker's voice may be in the centre."

Other details require to be added to that picture. On the walls hung those ancient implements of torture which recalled the palmy days of the Inquisi-



MAXIMILIEN MARIE ISIDORE ROBESPIERRE.

tion, here and there were symbols of anarchism and groups of tricolour flags, and elsewhere, most significant of all, were displayed garland-crowned portraits of Jacques Clément and Ravillac, each inscribed with the legend: "He was fortunate; he killed a king." Given such a theatre, and remembering the character of the audience and the violent nature of the speeches addressed to it, it is not surprising to learn that the tumult was often so great that muskets had to be fired to secure temporary silence. The revolutionary spirit of the club, too, was well illustrated by the questions put to candidates for membership, questions which included "What have you done to be hanged if the ancient régime is restored?" And others of a like significant nature.

By various circumstances, which it is not necessary to describe, the Jacobins Club at length became the chief power in Paris. To incur the displeasure of its leaders meant certain death. In the hands of Robespierre it became the chief engine of the Terror. Consequently it may easily be imagined how close a surveillance it exercised over its members and how careful those members were to avoid any action which might lay them open to suspicion.

Nothing, perhaps, better illustrates the despotic power of the club than an incident which took place at one of its meetings in the October of 1793. One of its most conspicuous members was François

Chabot, who had been a Franciscan friar but had availed himself of the Revolution to renounce his religious vows in favour of the more congenial occupation of political leadership. One of Chabot's peculiarities was his affectation of a sansculotte garb, a rough jacket which left his neck and chest uncovered and knee-breeches of coarse material, a device which may have been adopted to detract attention from the zeal with which he demonstrated how thoroughly he had broken his monkish vow of chastity. All this was, of course, in strict harmony with pure Jacobinism; no member of the club could possibly go too far in rebelling against authority and moral conventions. But the fiction of respect for poverty had to be kept up at all costs. The leaders and friends of "the people" had to take good care that their indulgences in the flesh-pots of the aristocrats were carefully hidden from their sansculotte followers.

And that necessity landed Chabot in a difficulty. It became known in October, 1793, that he was engaged to be married, and to be married, too, to a woman who was not only a foreigner and an aristocrat but also possessed a fortune of two or three hundred thousand francs. The news got abroad among the members of the Jacobins Club, creating ugly murmurs and bitter reflections on the backsliding of the bridegroom-elect, and Chabot realized that he must make a supreme effort to avert sus-

picion. He attired himself for the occasion with more than usual care, swathing his head in a dirty handkerchief, selecting his most tattered jacket and nether garments, and thrusting his feet into a pair of rough clogs stuffed with straw. He even appears to have smeared his face and neck and hands with an extra layer of dirt.

Such was the appearance of Chabot, then, filthy and clad in rags, when he rose in the Jacobins hall on that October night.

“ I take this opportunity,” he said, “ of informing the club that I am about to marry. Every one knows that I have been a priest, and even a Franciscan; I must therefore give you the motives that led to my resolve. As a legislator, I deemed it my duty to set an example of every virtue. I am reproached with being too fond of women. In allying myself to one in accordance with the law, a step which I have long desired to take, am I not doing my best to silence that calumny? Three weeks ago I was unaquainted with the woman I am about to marry. Brought up, according to the custom of her country, in absolute retirement, she had never come into contact with strangers. I was therefore not in love with her, and even now I am in love only with her virtue, her talents, and the purity of her Republicanism; in the same way she herself feels attracted towards me only by the repute of my patriotism. I had not the slightest intention of propos-

ing to her, but went to one of her brothers, Junius Frey — an estimable man of letters, and well known by two very patriotic works — to ask her hand for one of my relations. ‘To you, citizen, and to you alone, will I give her,’ said Junius Frey. I told him that the whole of my income amounted to seven hundred francs, and that I gave even that up to my father and mother. ‘No matter,’ he replied; ‘we give her to you for your own sake, and not for your fortune.’ I have been calumniated in this matter, citizens; it has been said that I had money, since I married so well. I will read you my marriage contract, and from this you will learn that the whole of my fortune consists of six thousand francs.”

That touching idyl of pure patriotism moved the Jacobins almost to tears, especially when the diffident bridegroom-elect concluded by asking the club to send a deputation to his wedding and the banquet that was to follow the ceremony. True, one cynical member did get on his feet and call attention to the nationality of the bride and the wealth of her dower, but his proposal that no deputation be appointed was voted down. The prospect of a sumptuous feast was too tempting a bait to be resisted. And so the reluctant Chabot was duly wedded to his “patriotic” bride, but seven months later that bride became a widow by favour of the guillotine. Chabot used his wife’s wealth in bribery for political ends and quickly paid the penalty.

While it is well known that the Jacobins Club had branches all over France it is not usually remembered that it also had a female auxiliary in Paris itself. There was, in fact, a female Jacobins Club, which met in the old library beneath the hall in which Chabot narrated his patriotic love-story. According to the testimony of eye-witnesses, the proceedings there were as turbulent as in the assembly above, and the speeches of the woman orators as inflammatory as those of the male Jacobins. Nay, those women Jacobins did more than orate; when bread and soap became scarce they marched in deputation to the Convention, and, failing to secure satisfaction there, next bore their full share in the looting of the shops.

But although the Jacobins Club was the most popular and powerful organization of its kind at the time of the Revolution, it must not be imagined it had the field all to itself. When the Parisian takes up a new idea he does so with enthusiasm. As the actor Fleury said, once the idea was adopted clubs became the rage of the city. There was, indeed, an epidemic of what one letter-writer described as "Clubocatrie." Another reported, "Clubs abound in every street, and almost in every hovel in Paris." As Carlyle said, "In such a France gregarious Reunions will needs multiply, intensify; French Life will step out of doors, and, from domestic, become a public Club Life. Old Clubs, which already germi-

nated, grow and flourish; new everywhere bud forth.”

Among those new societies several of the most notable were founded in protest against the Jacobins Club. Such, for example, was the moving cause which called into existence the *Quatre-Vingt-Neuf*, the *Enragés*, *Le Monarchique*, the Cordeliers, and the Feuillants. But the nature of the protest was not the same in each case. With the club of 1789 and the Feuillants, for example, the impelling motive was conservatism and a desire to thwart the extreme measures of the Jacobins; with the Cordeliers the motive was quite the opposite, for the men who founded that club thought the Jacobins too lukewarm and moderate.

It was in May, 1790, that the Cordeliers Club was established, its moving spirits being Danton, and Desmoulins, and Marat. As was the case with the Jacobins, it took its name from its meeting-place, which had been the church of the monastery of the Cordeliers, otherwise the Grey Friars, a building which still exists as the Dupuytren Museum. Even when the club removed to a hall on the Rue Dauphin it still retained its monastic name.

Started with the avowed determination to watch the government, no matter what form the government might take, the club adopted an open eye as its emblem, and all through its existence its leaders were distinguished for the violence of their ora-

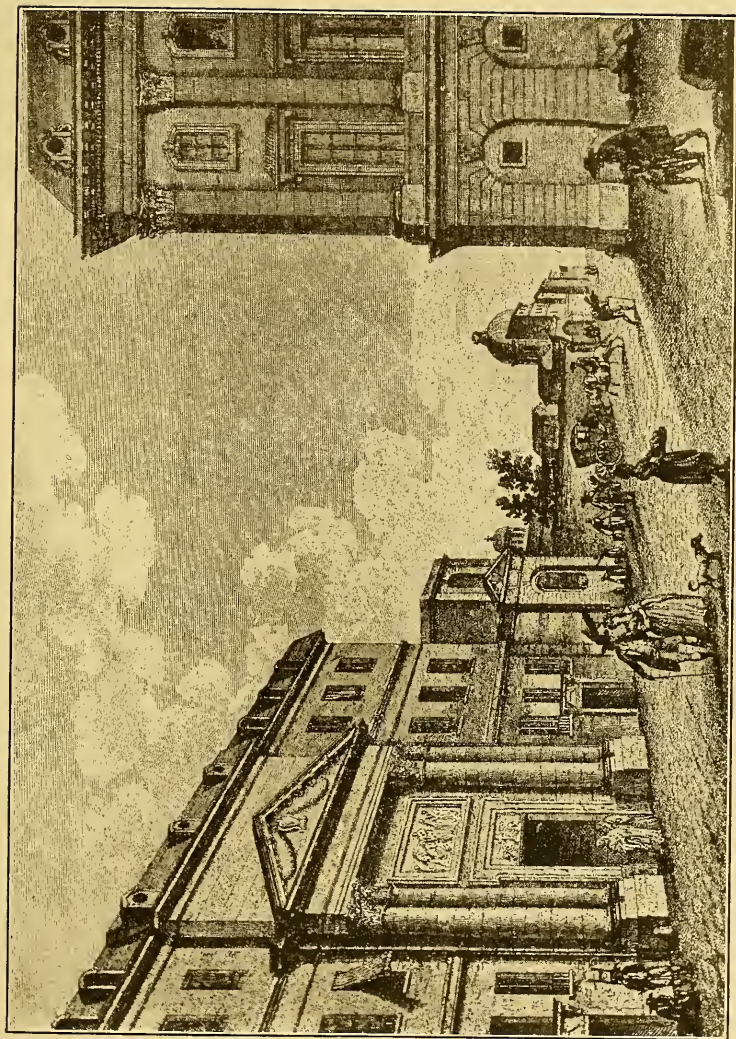
tions. Naturally, then, its constitution was more democratic than that of any other revolutionary club; membership was granted on easy terms and for a small fee, and the discussions were thrown open to all. The most vivid memories of the club cluster around the person of Marat, whose printing-press was stored in the vaults of the church in which he was one of the most impassioned orators. That church, too, was to witness Marat's theatrical apotheosis. For when the knife of Charlotte Corday had accomplished its beneficent purpose, and its victim had been buried with tawdry pomp in the garden of the Grey Friars Monastery, Marat's heart, duly inurned, was swung by a long chain from the roof of the church which had so often echoed to his violent speeches. That ceremony was concluded with an apostrophe by the President of the club. "Precious and divine remains!" he exclaimed. "Shall our souls be perjured? You demand to be revenged, and your assassins still live! Arise, Grey Friars! It is time. Let us avenge Marat and console the heart of weeping France."

Perhaps the dramatic orator might have wept for himself and the other leaders of the Cordeliers could he have foreseen that nine months later the guillotine was to be the reward of their revolutionary zeal.

Briefer were the annals and less theatrical the extinction of the Feuillants Club. The men who

founded it were friends of liberty but not of license; they were, indeed, members of the Jacobins Club up to the day that society adopted a petition in favour of the deposition of the King. Convinced that such an extreme measure would be the beginning of lawlessness, they opposed the petition to the utmost, and when it was adopted despite their protests they withdrew from the Jacobins and founded a club of their own. It took its name of the Feuillants from the fact that another monastery on the Rue St. Honoré, that of the Feuillants, was selected as its chief meeting-place. The leading members included Barnave, Duport, the Lameths, Lavoisier, and Chénier, and for a time it seemed as though the club would quickly prove a formidable rival to the Jacobins. But the high subscription fee of four louis plus a charge of six livres for attendance, soon checked the influx of new adherents, while the luxurious manner in which the club premises were fitted up and the tendency to high living indulged by the members were warning beacons to those astute politicians who relied upon the masses for their audience.

Besides, there was the opposition of the Jacobins to be reckoned with. That opposition at length took the form most dreaded by the Parisian — ridicule. One evening, then, when the Feuillants were in session, the gallery of their meeting-place was suddenly invaded by a band of street ruffians and pros-



MEETING - PLACE OF THE FEUILLANTS CLUB.

titutes, who, under the leadership of a zealous Jacobin, at once began to interrupt the proceedings by irrelevant shouts and cat-calls. This, as a member of the club testified, might have been endured and the intruders even driven from the hall, had not one of the disturbers broken out into an imitation of cock-crowing as a delicate compliment to that leader of the Feuillants who edited a paper called "The Crowing of the Cock." Insults were bad enough, "but before this piece of ridicule we could only take refuge in flight. It was raining," this apologist added, "and as many of the Jacobins were moving about in the lobby with their umbrellas under their arms and inciting the mob to create further disturbances, a rumour was set afloat in Paris next day that we had been driven out at the point of the umbrella."

Such tactics having proved so successful, they were naturally repeated. The Jacobin emissaries grew even bolder, for when the Feuillants next assembled in their hall they found their tribune occupied by an impudent street urchin and had not the pluck to eject him before first calling in the aid of the police. Their apologist may declare that the club was overthrown by the "scum of the pavement" and "abandoned women," but the truer verdict is that it failed through lack of manhood among its members.

One by one the Jacobins, then, got rid of all their

rivals, some by devious methods, others by forcible suppression, until at length the club once more had the political field to itself. But as by that time it was irrevocably committed to desperate measures and had stained its annals by the bloodshedding of the Reign of Terror its own doom was not to be long delayed. The fall of Robespierre resulted in the closing of the club, and, although several attempts were made to revive it, by November, 1794, it had ended its chequered career. Such of its sympathizers who dared to make their appearance in the cafés were immediately assailed by the *jeunesse dorée* and chased out into the streets. And with the passing of the Jacobins it became possible for the idea of the club to play a less disturbing part in the life of Paris.

There was one variety of the club, however, which was common in the French capital long before the Revolution, namely, the gambling-house. No nation, and, least of all, France, has needed to wait upon another for an example in the matter of games of chance, though some races have been more forward than others in catering for the deep-rooted passion for gambling. In making his Persian observers comment upon the prevalence of gaming in Paris it is suggestive that Montesquieu does not imply that there were specific clubs in existence for that purpose in 1714; all he concerns himself with is to note how widespread the evil was and to affirm

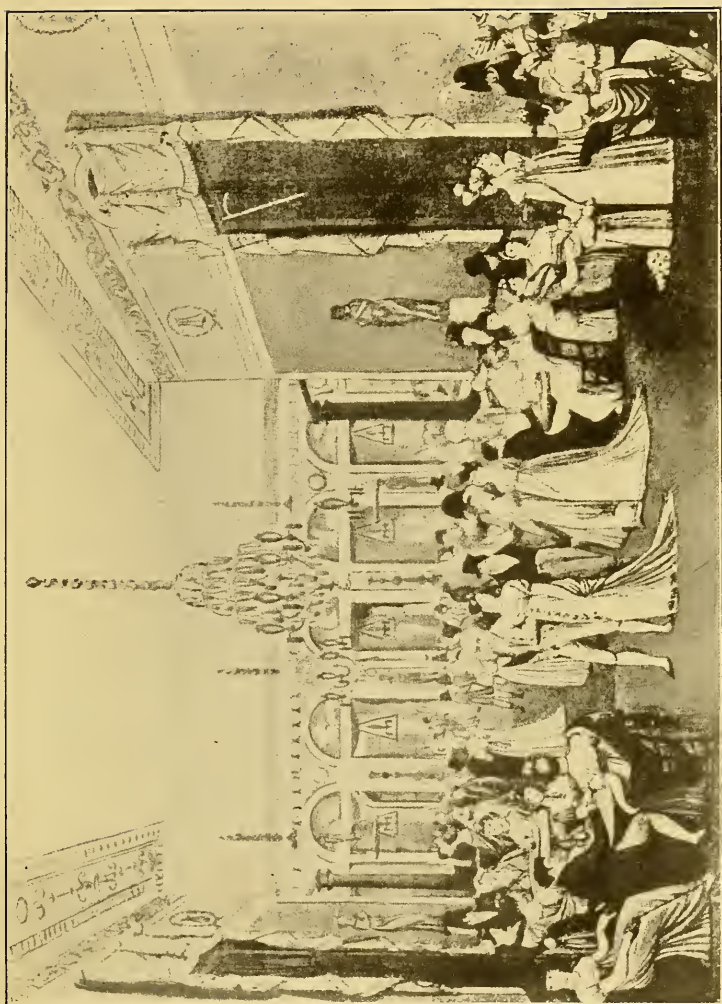
that to be a gamester admitted a man, without examination, "to the rank of a gentleman." When he wrote man, he meant woman, too; for he described the women of Paris as slaves to the passion of play, the last device to complete that ruin of their husbands which they began by extravagance and continued by gallantry.

By the time Horace Walpole paid his first visit to Paris a quarter of a century later gambling clubs of a particularly tempting nature were plentiful. "You would not easily guess their notions of honour," he wrote of the Parisians: "I'll tell you one: it is very dishonourable for any gentleman not to be in the army, or in the king's service as they call it, and it is no dishonour to keep public gaming-houses: there are at least one hundred and fifty people of the first quality in Paris who live by it. You may go into their houses at all hours of the night, and find hazard, faro, etc. The men who keep the hazard-table at the Duke of Gesvres' pay him twelve guineas each night for the privilege. Even the princesses of the blood are dirty enough to have shares in the banks kept at their houses."

With such examples in high places, it is not surprising that the gambling club became ubiquitous in Paris. It was not confined to the ancestral mansions of nobles or princesses, but was to be found in more plebeian buildings specially devoted to games of chance. One of the most famous of these

was the palatial Frascati edifice, which stood at the corner of the Boulevard Montmartre and the Rue Vivienne; another was situated in the Palais Royal; while a third, the Circle des Etrangers, for a time outrivalled Frascati's as the fashionable resort of the city.

When Emerson paid his first visit to Paris in 1833 the Frascati Club was already notorious as the most noted gambling resort of the city, and was then established in a handsome house on the Rue Richelieu. The philosopher of Concord included it in his sight-seeing and duly recorded his experience in his journal. "Several servants in livery were waiting in the hall, who took our hats on entering, and we passed at once into the suite of rooms in all of which play was going on. The most perfect decorum and civility prevailed, the table was covered with little piles of napoleons which seemed to change masters very rapidly, but scarce a word was spoken. Servants carry about lemonade, etc., but no heating liquor. The house, I was told, is always one party in the game. Several women were present, but many of the company seemed to be mere spectators like ourselves. After walking round the tables, we returned to the hall, gave the servant a franc for our hats, and departed." Emerson added that Frascati had "grown very rich;" had he foreseen that he was to die insolvent he might have appended a philosophical moral to his little narrative.



FRASCATI'S GAMBLING CLUB.

Many years before Emerson wandered through the Frascati saloons one of the most constant frequenters of the club was a certain M. de Lubsac, a handsome and witty officer of the royal household who had eclipsed all rivals for the favours of Louise Contat, the famous and fascinating soubrette of the Comédie-Française. Presuming on the attachment of the actress, De Lubsac, one wild and reckless night at Frascati's, staked all the diamonds and jewelry of his mistress, and lost. Hence, a day or two later, when Mlle. Contat went to her jewel-cases, she found them empty. This was a genuine case of missing diamonds, and the actress sent for the police in hot haste. But before they arrived the guilty De Lubsac made a full confession, and found he had counted too much on the attachment of his mistress, for she was furious at her loss. De Lubsac now adopted the tone of the penitent, concluding his expression of unutterable sorrow with the reflection, "Ah, if I only had a few louis at this moment I could repair everything!" To Mlle. Contat's question as to what he meant by such a remark, he rejoined that he had an instinct that luck would favour him that night if he only had the means to put it to the test. Of course, Mlle. Contat at once produced a couple of louis, "the last she had in the world," and De Lubsac hurried off to Frascati's to win back all his mistress's jewels and a considerable sum in addition.

While at Frascati's and similar clubs the only handicap of the gambler was the law of chance, there were many other haunts in Paris where his risks were increased by various swindling devices. The methods of those more or less secret clubs were revealed by a notable trial which took place in 1833, when four keepers of such places were indicted for the use of *cartes bizotés*, that is, cards which had been shaved at the edges to make them thinner or shorter. The chief witness, a young man named Sirat, explained how he had been invited to a "patriotic dinner" where he would have the privilege of meeting General Dubourg, how the gathering proved to be a mixed affair of "luxury and poverty," how after the meal *écarté* was introduced, and how he and his partner, the general, after winning a few francs, suddenly began to lose and finally found themselves responsible for the payment of some thousands of francs. Before leaving the venue of that "patriotic dinner" M. Sirat secured one of the packs of cards, and subsequent inquiries disclosed that the master of the house had been a mountebank, a tooth-drawer, and a conjurer. Those facts, and the prepared cards, coupled with later discoveries as to the losses of some of his friends, determined him to make an effort to bring the swindlers to justice. One of them, Houdaille by name, on being called upon for his defence, protested that he was being made the victim of a tissue of falsehoods,

that he was a respectable man who always "went to bed every night at nine o'clock" and that any dealings he had had with M. Sirat had been prompted by a desire to save from ruin a young man for whom he had the affection of a father! The court, however, was unmoved by that seductive story of injured innocence and self-sacrificing altruism; M. Houdaille and his colleagues were promptly fined and sentenced to a year's imprisonment.

But gambling clubs as such were not then illegal in Paris. They were, indeed, not only connived at but actually licensed by the government, and that they were exceedingly numerous may be inferred from the fact that the fees for the licenses added more than five million francs to the annual revenue.

When at length public opinion had grown sufficiently sensitive to protest against the government recognizing and deriving profit from the gambling clubs of Paris, the minister in charge of the national finances was anxious to learn how the objectors proposed to make good the deficit which the abolition of the licenses would create. But even that pointed question did not avail; such lurid accounts of the crime and misery caused by the clubs were given in the chamber that during a debate in that assembly in 1836 a motion was passed in favour of the withdrawal of licenses and the prohibition of the clubs on and after the last day of the following year.

In the closing days of December, 1837, then, the patrons of Frascati's, the Circle des Etrangers, and all the other licensed clubs, were not surprised to find posted up in all the rooms of these establishments an official notice to the effect that at midnight on the thirty-first day of that month they would be finally closed, and that play would not be permitted for a single minute after the hour named. With that announcement the keepers of the clubs also displayed a notice intimating that on that last day the houses would be opened at nine o'clock in the evening instead of eleven o'clock, as had been the rule.

Although the last day of December fell upon a Sunday, that made no difference to the thousands of gamblers who assembled to stake their last hazards under governmental authority. Dense crowds gathered at the doors to await their opening, and no sooner had they been unbarred than all the rooms were filled to overflowing and the tables piled high with golden coin. In fact, so vast were the crowds that at many clubs it became necessary to close the outer doors and refuse admission. Promptly at the hour of midnight all play ceased, and when the gamblers left their haunts they found they had to face the jeers and jibes of the mobs which had collected to celebrate their discomfiture. Some of them, however, were in a mood which made them indifferent to such attentions, for of not a few it is recorded

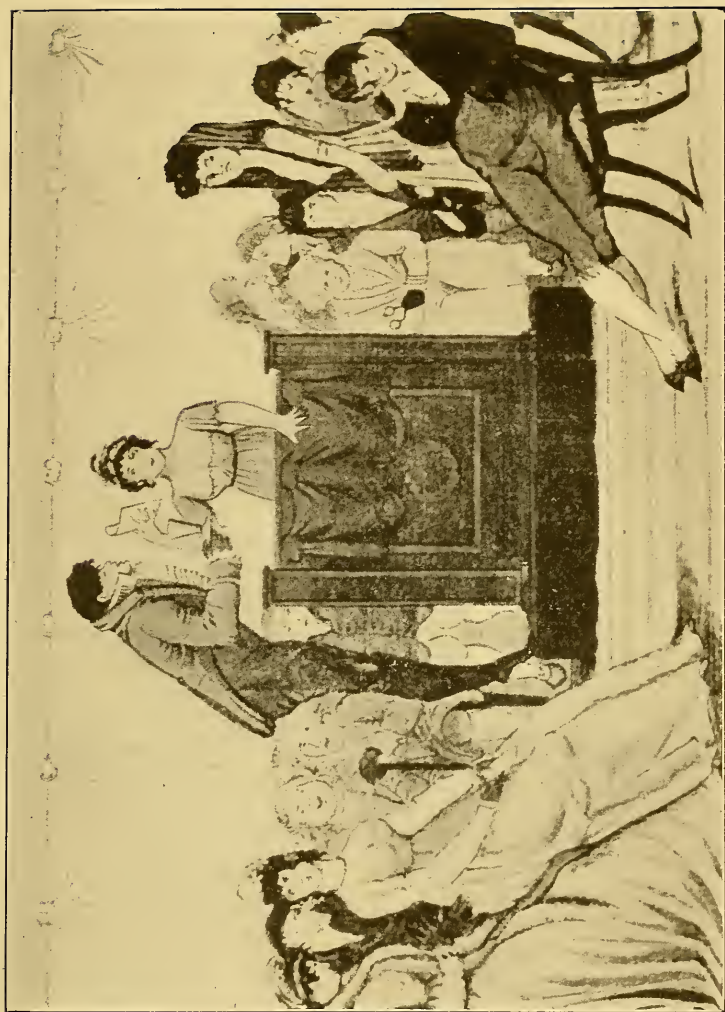
that their losses were so heavy that they committed suicide.

Although, as has been shown, the Parisian was largely indebted to "perfidious Albion" for the club idea, he naturally christened his societies with native names. With one exception, that of the Jockey Club, which, though bearing the Gallic title of *Société d'Encouragement*, is, and always has been known by its English name. That is only natural in view of the fact that it was founded when Anglo-mania was the fashion. The club has had a varied history since it took shape in a modest building on the Rue du Helder — headquarters which would be scorned by those members who can remember no other home than the sumptuous edifice in which they are now housed on the Rue Scribe. And its members have been as varied as its history. Many of the earliest were patrons of the old Café de Paris, men who though "not knowing a fetlock from a pasture" eagerly welcomed an opportunity to belong to a colony more exclusive than that of a restaurant which was open to all who could pay their bills. The founders of the Jockey Club were, however, guileless enough to admit Eugène Sue as a member, an act of grace which they had ample cause to regret when the success of "The Mysteries of Paris" caused that persistent poser to put on airs. However, they got rid of him at last under that convenient rule which enabled them to erase the name of

a member who was in arrears with his subscription.

As Albert Vandam observed, though the Jockey Club of those early years was by no means the unobtrusive society it has since become, its excesses and eccentricities were not blazoned from the rooftops. "A M. de Chateauvillard might take it into his head to play a game of billiards on horseback, or M. de Machado might live surrounded by a couple of hundred parrots if he liked; none of these fancies attracted the public's notice: M. Sue, by his very profession, attracted too much of it, and brought a great deal of it into the club itself." Hence his violent protest against his expulsion was in vain; the committee had erased his name and took care it was not restored.

Previous chapters have adduced ample evidence that many of the taverns and cafés of old Paris derived not a little of their profit from the fact that they were the haunts of literary coteries, but there were other reunions or clubs of writers which either owned no allegiance to a tavern or café or refused to confine their patronage to any one establishment of that kind. Among these unattached clubs the first place is upon all accounts due to that little group of seven or eight men who, about the year 1629, formed themselves into a society for the discussion of literary subjects. The moving spirit of that gathering was Valentin Conrart, the secretary of the king's



A CARICATURE OF THE LITERARY CLUB.

council, who was a relative of Bishop Godeau. Whenever that prelate visited Paris he lodged in Conrart's house, and on such occasions several literary men were in the habit of calling there to enjoy converse with the bishop. It seems highly probable that this was the origin of the subsequent gatherings in Conrart's house — gatherings at which he and his friends were in the habit of reading and discussing each other's writings. Although the members were pledged to secrecy, the existence of the club at last became known to Richelieu who soon afterwards offered the members his protection and the privilege of incorporation into a recognized society. As such gatherings as theirs were not legal, and as the famous cardinal was too powerful a minister to offend, the members of the club waived their preference for privacy and accepted Richelieu's proposal with due expression of that gratitude which policy dictated but which they were so far from feeling. Such was the origin of the French Academy of forty immortals. As a literary club it existed little more than six years.

Apart from the Academy, which is in a distinct category of its own, none of the literary clubs of Paris have ever rivalled that continuity of history which The Club of London has to its credit. That may be accounted for partly by the volatile nature of the French temperament, partly by the fact that many of the clubs have centred in a single individ-

ual, and partly by the consideration that not a few of those coteries have been formed solely for the purpose of exploiting some one definite and innovating idea.

Two pertinent examples of the type of literary club which owed its existence to the fascination of a personality are provided by the coteries of which Boileau and Molière were the centres. They had an almost contemporaneous existence in the latter half of the seventeenth century, that presided over by Boileau meeting in his house on the Rue du Vieux Colombier in the Faubourg St. Germain, and the one of which Molière was the host in the dramatist's pleasant rural retreat at Auteuil.

Priority of establishment probably belongs to the Boileau club, which is often referred to as The Four because its chief members were Molière, La Fontaine, Racine, and the host, but as Chapelle and Peter Mignard were frequent guests it would be more correct to describe the coterie as Boileau's sextette. La Fontaine placed on record a brief sketch of the club which will be read with interest. "Four friends, whose acquaintance had begun at the foot of Parnassus, held a sort of society, which I should call an Academy, if their number had been sufficiently great, and if they had had as much regard for the Muses as for pleasure. The first thing which they did was to banish from among them all rules of conversation, and everything which savours of

the academic conference. When they met, and had sufficiently discussed their arrangements, if chance threw them upon any point of science or belles-lettres, they profited by the occasion; it was, however, without dwelling too long on the same subject, flitting from one thing to another like the bees that meet divers sorts of flowers on their way. Neither envy, malice, nor cabal, had any voice among them. They adored the work of the ancients, never refused due praise to those of the moderns, spoke modestly of their own, and gave each other sincere counsel, when any one of them — which rarely happened — fell into the malady of the age, and published a book.”

Evidently the mirthful little conspiracies of which the famous fabulist, owing to his absence of mind and childlike simplicity, was the frequent object, were taken in as good part as they were concocted, for than his picture of the club nothing could suggest closer fraternity and good comradeship. La Fontaine, indeed, had so attractive a personality that no one had the heart to carry a joke against him beyond the innocent stage. The considerateness with which the genial fabulist was treated is well illustrated by one anecdote of the club. At one gathering the company included a brother of the host, a doctor of Sorbonne, who expatiated at great length upon the merits of St. Augustine. La Fontaine, who had relapsed into one of his moods of

abstraction, seemed to listen without hearing, but at length roused himself sufficiently to ask the eulogist whether he thought St. Augustine had "as much wit as Rabelais?" For any other interrupter the learned divine would probably have had a sharp retort, but to the gentle fabulist all he replied was, "Take care, Monsieur La Fontaine; you have put one of your stockings on wrong side outwards." Had the eulogist of St. Augustine been a regular member of the club he and La Fontaine might both have been called upon to pay the penalty which had been devised by the lively Chapelle to preserve the harmony of the meetings. This was the imposition of the task of reading aloud so many lines from Chapelain's inflated "Pucelle," a copy of which always lay on the table.

Molière's club at Auteuil was as fraternal and convivial as that which met in the Rue du Vieux Colombier. One incident which took place there would seem to indicate that Boileau's attempt to convert Chapelle to temperance principles was merely a temporary aberration. On the occasion in question Molière was too indisposed to act as host; having to keep his room, he deputed Boileau to take his place at the head of the table. The famous critic made an efficient substitute, and by the time the night grew late all the guests were intoxicated. It was at this stage that one of them started a discussion on the evils of life and adduced as a fine

axiom of wisdom the remark by an ancient writer to the effect that the greatest happiness was not to be born and the next greatest to die promptly. This appealed strongly to the bibulous Chapelle; "Monsieurs," he exclaimed in alcoholic frenzy, "are we not cowards? It is a noble maxim that we have just quoted; let us act upon it. The river is hard by; let us drown ourselves. It is stupid to murmur when we can escape from what we murmur against." The other toppers agreed; embraced each other for a final farewell, and were about to leave the house when Molière appeared upon the scene. As well as they could, his guests explained the situation, only to be reproached by the dramatist for having left him out of consideration; had they no more affection for him than such an oversight implied? The ever-ready Chapelle admitted they had done their friend an injustice, but made what amends he could by inviting him to join them at the eleventh hour. "Gently," Molière replied; "regard must be had to the time when such a sacrifice as this is made. If we drowned ourselves at this hour it would be said that we were either drunk or driven to despair. It will be the last action of our lives, and its heroic nature must be made patent to the world. No; let it be when the sun is high in the heavens, when people are astir, when it will be seen that we are in full possession of our faculties." Once more the pliable Chapelle agreed, and Molière

had the satisfaction of seeing his guests to bed.

Manifestly such clubs as these could not survive such unique hosts. And the seeds of decay were inherent in many other literary reunions just because they were called into existence by way of protest. Such, for example, was the Cénacle, that band of enthusiasts who toiled for the Romantic revival. Chief among its members was Victor Hugo, others included such like-minded writers as Alfred de Vigny, Jules de Rességuier, and Émile and Antony Deschamps. Sainte-Beuve, too, was of the number, and once paid a tribute to his colleagues in these lines:

“ Both good and great they were, from jealous passions free;
Nor suffer’d that the honey of their verse should be
 Barb’d with an angry sting;
Though high as zenith-sun their fame, and all ablaze,
It ne’er was known to burn with scorching rays
 The tiniest flower of spring.”

Throughout the winter months the members of the Cénacle met at each other’s houses; in the summer they made excursions into the country; in winter or summer their chief concern was to confirm each other in the faith of Romance, and when that triumphed the mission of the club was at an end.

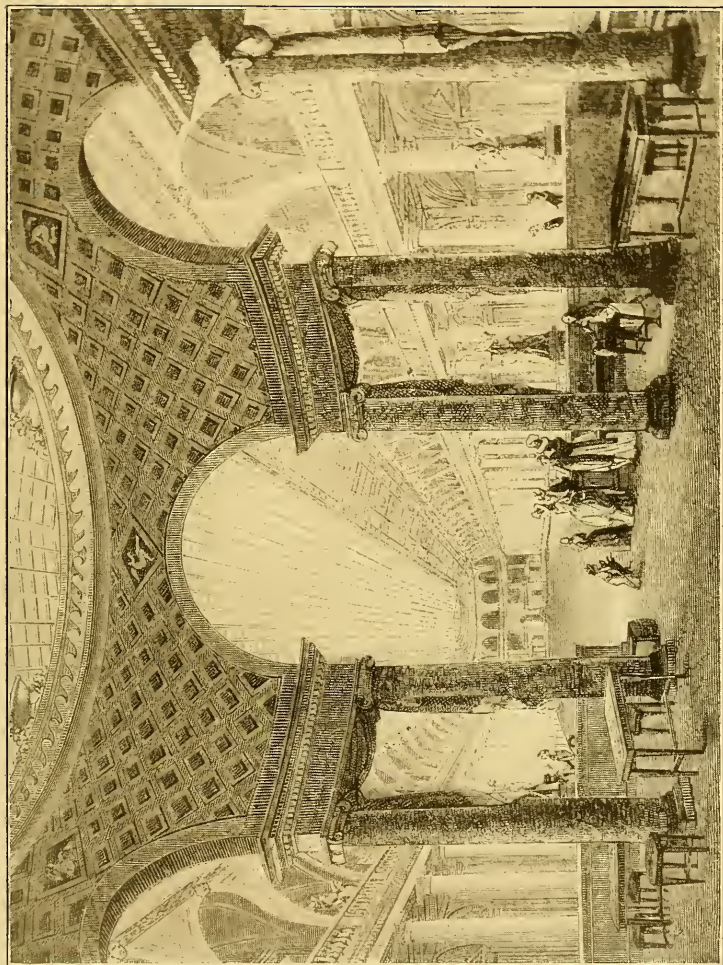
So, too, a more modern example of the literary club, “ the Flaubert dinner ” or “ the dinner of un-

successful authors," carried its failure in its constitution. For all the members, Flaubert, and Zola, and Jules de Goncourt, and Daudet, and Tourguéneff, gradually qualified for automatic expulsion. But those gatherings were delightful while they lasted, "friendly dinners," said Daudet, "where we talked in perfect freedom, elbows on table, our minds thoroughly roused to action." The club often changed its place of meeting, wandering from café to café in search of the Normandy butter demanded by Flaubert or the sea-urchins stipulated by Zola, and the gatherings were protracted from seven in the evening until two o'clock the following morning. Books and the drama, the politics of the hour, the chief incidents of the passing day, were all eagerly debated, Flaubert and Zola in their shirt-sleeves and Tourguéneff lounging on a divan, but in the end the talk ever veered to the "ever-present themes and ideas of love and death." When Flaubert died the dinners became a hollow feast; despite several efforts to resume them after his funeral, his empty seat and the absence of his genial laugh proved how futile those efforts were. And so the project was dropped and the Flaubert dinner numbered among the Parisian clubs of the past.

CHAPTER VIII

PLEASURE GARDENS

PLEASURE gardens were a comparatively late addition to the amenities of old Paris. Those maps of the city which depict its growth in diagram, and those quaint bird's-eye views which perpetuate its aspect as it appeared in the seventeenth century, offer sufficient explanation of that fact. Take, for example, such a map as that which shows the incircling line of bastion fortifications, and within that line the five other outlines which have at different periods marked the limits of the city, and it will be impossible to examine such a diagram without being reminded of a transverse section of a tree trunk roughly octagonal in shape. At the heart of the section, the core of the tree as it were, is a dark spot of small dimensions, and that tiny nucleus represents the extent and condition of Paris in the seventeenth century. When that impression is supplemented by an inspection of a bird's-eye view of the city at that period, the narrow streets and densely packed houses make it obvious that it was necessary for Paris to burst its bonds before it could indulge in such luxuries as pleasure gardens.



THE CIRCUS OF THE PALAIS ROYAL.

Such an abandonment of the old city walls did not take place until midway through the eighteenth century. The Paris of Montesquieu in the first quarter of that century was "a city built in the air," a city of "six or seven houses on one another," that is, a congeries of high buildings so constructed because space was limited. It was an early example of the problem of Manhattan island without a legitimate excuse for indulging in skyscrapers. In 1749 Voltaire appealed in vain for more elbow room in the city, for open spaces and "roomy cross-ways;" and six years later Mirabeau complained that the quays and the bridges of the Seine were the only spacious thoroughfares, and that there was "no place for public festivities."

For many years, indeed, the principal *al fresco* amusement of the Parisian was the promenade. For this innocent occupation the ramparts of the city were in great favour, and also the gardens of the Palais Royal, the Tuileries, and the Luxembourg, but, in course of time, the promenaders, especially amorous couples, ventured outside the boundaries of the city proper into the fields and rural lanes around the capital. Hence the distinction drawn by a writer of the early eighteenth century: "We have two sorts of promenades in Paris; the one to which people go to see and be seen, the other to be seen by nobody." In those days the Parisians were easily amused; in fact, with many of them, a taste

for simple pleasures survived until well on in the nineteenth century, for Gavarni, in recalling the days of his youth, was wont to dwell upon the many pleasure parties who found all their requirements met by unpretentious outings in the Bois de Boulogne.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, however, a change began to manifest itself in the character of out-door amusements. And the man who seems to have been most responsible for that change was an enterprising and ingenious Italian named Torre who, in August, 1764, obtained special permission to exhibit a grand display of fireworks. According to an account of that event preserved by Disraeli in his "Curiosities of Literature," the Parisians "admired the variety of the colours, and the ingenious forms of his fire. But his first exhibition was disturbed by the populace, as well as by the apparent danger of the fire, although it was displayed on the Boulevards. In October it was repeated; and proper precautions having been taken, they admired the beauty of the fire, without fearing it. These artificial fires are described as having been rapidly and splendidly executed. The exhibition closed with a transparent triumphal arch, and a curtain illuminated by the same fire, admirably exhibiting the palace of Pluto. Around the columns, stanzas were inscribed, supported by cupids, and other fanciful embellishments. Among

these little pieces of poetry appeared the following one, which ingeniously announced a more perfect exhibition :

“ ‘ The icy gale, the falling snow,
Extinction to these Fires shall bring;
But, like the Flowers, with brighter glow,
They shall renew their charms in spring.’ ”

Torre, in fact, had the genius of a showman and the prescience of a diplomat. He was confident of his ability to give the Parisian a new form of amusement, and he evidently had sufficient capital not to be in too great a hurry to reap the harvest of his enterprise. And so, after the manner of an astute manufacturer who believes he has a good article to offer the public, Torre paved his way by offering samples gratis. His public firework exhibitions, in short, were so much ground-bait; he appreciated the value of whetting the curiosity of the people quite as keenly as the modern circus manager who sends his animals and performers parading through a town in the interests of publicity.

Five years after that free exhibition of fireworks, then, the enterprising Torre began to benefit from his well-laid plans. A paragraph in the “ Annual Register ” of London, dated June, 1769, is significant of the success which the clever Italian had won. “ They write from Paris, that on the festival of Corpus Christi the sieur Torre opened his new

Vauxhall, near St. Martin's gate, under the denomination of the Feasts of Tempe. He has laid out upwards of fifty thousand crowns to establish this place of entertainment, which is to be open Sundays and Thursdays. It was calculated that there were between ten and twelve thousand persons present the first evening; they pay half a crown admittance; and all the opulent families, both of court and city, seem eager to shut up and stifle themselves there, instead of going to breathe the pure air in the public walks."

That paragraph is interesting for several reasons. It indicates, for one thing, the situation of the Vauxhall Torre, or the Summer Vauxhall, as it was also called, as being close to the Porte Saint Martin, which now stands in the midst of the surging life of the Grands Boulevards. In 1769 that triumphal arch was practically one of the gates of the city, and hence the locality of Torre's place of amusement shows that a beginning had been made towards seeking sites for such resorts outside the city proper. Again, the name used to describe the place, Vauxhall, is evidence that Torre was acquainted with the history of the London resort of that name and inspired by a desire to provide Paris with an imitation. For, at that time, the Vauxhall of London had been in existence more than a century and was at the height of its popularity. The time was propitious for the copying of British institutions, for at

that juncture, as Gibbon had noted a year or two earlier, British opinions, British fashions, and even British games were being eagerly adopted by the French. And, finally, the paragraph of the London chronicler, with its reference to the stifling atmosphere of Torre's Vauxhall, seems to show that at first the idea of the Vauxhall was not clearly comprehended, that, in short, the copyist had failed to appreciate the necessity of providing attractive gardens as an essential part of the scheme.

For a time, however, the Vauxhall Torre prospered amazingly. As responsive as the Athenians to anything new, the Parisians poured out of St. Martin's Gate in their thousands and handsomely recompensed their Italian entertainer for all his free fireworks exhibitions. And it was not long ere Torre's example was followed by other enterprising showmen. In the few years subsequent to 1769 there was an epidemic of Vauxhalls. One of the most pretentious of these imitations was that erected at the western end of the Champs Elysées at a cost of eight hundred thousand dollars, and named the Colisée. The chief building was a spacious rotunda nearly eighty feet in diameter, admirably adapted, it might have been thought, for the middle-class dancers it was designed to attract. But here again the mistake was made of providing for practically one type of amusement only, namely, dancing — a mistake which soon proved fatal. Besides, in those

early days, the Vauxhalls were opened only on two or three days of the week.

Such buildings as those erected by Torre and his earliest imitators were really more suitable for winter than summer amusement, and hence it is hardly surprising that the most successful of them all was that known as the Winter Vauxhall.

By the winter of 1784 this was firmly established in Parisian favour not merely for the elegance of its saloons but for the resource and ingenuity displayed in the entertainment of its patrons. And never was that Winter Vauxhall the scene of greater gaiety than at the famous fête of 1784. That was the winter, it will be remembered, which, by reason of its severity and the suffering thereby entailed on the poor, helped to prepare the way for the French Revolution. It was also a season remarkable for strenuous efforts to relieve the widespread distress. In these charitable labours, as is always the case, none shared more heartily than the members of the theatrical profession. Each playhouse gave a special performance for the benefit of the poor, the piece presented at the Comédie-Française being the "Coriolanus" of Jean La Harpe, which, notwithstanding the object for which it was given, was attacked by M. de Champcenetz in a biting epigram.

It is necessary to keep the foregoing in mind to appreciate a lively scene which took place in the Winter Vauxhall at the fête mentioned above. The

fête had been arranged in the interests of the poor of the city, and the programme included contributions by the leading players from the principal theatres in addition to dancing, illuminations, and lotteries. Until well on in the evening, the lotteries had provided much innocent amusement. The prizes, which were drawn for at intervals in sets of five, consisted of inexpensive jewelry and a number of grotesque china figures, the latter creating much merriment as they were handed to the winners. One of these figures, which represented a shivering old man in the act of warming himself, was awarded to a sprightly officer, who, holding it aloft, asked in a loud tone, "What is this supposed to be?" At once a voice in the crowd answered, "A Coriolanus." The speaker was M. de Champcenetz, and it so happened that La Harpe, the author of the play, was also close at hand. The jester was aware of that fact and thought it discreet to take refuge in a friend's box, whither, however, he was followed by the irate dramatist. And now the spectators were treated to an item not on the programme, a fierce duel of words between La Harpe and Champcenetz, the latter at length managing to recite his epigram on his adversary's play:

*" Pour les pauvres, la Comédie
Joue une pauvre tragédie;
C'est bien le cas, en vérité,
De l'applaudir par charité."*

Although not lacking in invective, La Harpe was no match for his opponent in readiness of wit, and so he retired from the unequal combat, especially as his foe had the advantage in situation, Champcenetz firing off his sallies from the elevation of his friend's box while the dramatist had the less conspicuous standpoint of the arena floor.

Fleury, the comedian, who describes this incident, gives at the same time a brief account of the other attractions of the Winter Vauxhall on the occasion of that memorable fête. Such a display of splendour, he says, had never before been witnessed. "The four saloons were sumptuously decorated; the colonnade over the rotunda was illuminated by a most ingenious contrivance, by means of which a central light, not visible to the spectators, diffused streams of variegated radiance — blue, red, yellow, and white. The colonnade, thus lighted, looked like some fairy structure formed of suspended vapours, so light and shadowy, that it seemed as though a single breath of air might annihilate them. But the rotunda — how shall I describe the rotunda?" It was not the building itself which gave pause to Fleury's pen, but the galaxy of feminine beauty whose charms he felt incompetent to depict. Such arms and hands and waists and "lovely shoulders" as would have adorned a far more elegant setting than a box of the Winter Vauxhall. Perhaps it was that display of the flesh in environments usually

thought to savour of the world and the devil which made the curés of Paris decline to handle the money raised by the fêtes for the benefit of the poor.

Some six years subsequent to the date of that fête those Parisians who found enjoyment in frequenting such resorts as the Winter Vauxhall were able to gratify their taste in the heart of the city. Writing in January, 1790, Arthur Young, whose interests were more centred in cabbage than in pleasure gardens, gave a mildly satirical account of a recent addition to the amusement resorts of the city. “At night to the national circus, as it is called, at the Palais Royal, a building in the gardens, or area, of that palace, the most whimsical and expensive folly that is easily to be imagined: it is a large ball-room, sunk half its height under ground; and, as if this circumstance were not sufficiently adapted to make it damp enough, a garden is planted on the roof, and a river is made to flow around it, which, with the addition of some spirting *jets d’eau*, have undoubtedly made it a delicious place for a winter’s entertainment. The expense of this gewgaw building, the project of some of the Duke of Orleans’s friends, I suppose, and executed at his expense, would have established an English farm, with all the principles, buildings, live stock, tools, and crops, on a scale that would have done honour to the first sovereign of Europe; for it would have

converted five thousand arpents of desert into a garden. As to the result of the mode that has been pursued, of investing such a capital, I know no epithet equal to its merits. It is meant to be concert, ball, coffee, and billiard room, with shops, etc., designed to be something in the style of the amusements of our Pantheon. There were music and singing to-night, but the room being almost empty, it was, on the whole, equally cold and sombre.”

If all the Winter Vauxhalls of Paris were conducted on similar lines it is not surprising that they failed to attract the populace save on special occasions. To think of visiting in winter a half-underground ball-room surrounded by a river and equipped with numerous fountains is enough to freeze the blood in one's veins. From such a chilly atmosphere it is a genial relief to turn to the picture given by another diarist of that period, namely, Dr. John Moore, an Englishman who was in Paris in the August of 1792, and who recorded in his journal the incidents of an evening drive in the Champs Elysées.

Although the Tenth of August and the sack of the Tuileries had happened but a few days earlier, the Elysian Fields on that summer night were crowded with people of all classes. Under the trees or on open stretches of grass countless booths had been put up which resounded with music and singing. Here and there pantomimes and puppet-shows were

surrounded by laughing crowds; elsewhere merry dancing-parties tripped the light fantastic toe over the greensward. "Are these people as happy as they seem?" asked Dr. Moore of his French companion, who rejoined, "They are as happy as the gods." And yet the shadow of the Revolution hovered over all that merrymaking on the Champs Elysées. "One fellow, on a kind of stage, had a monkey who played a thousand tricks. When the man called him 'aristocrat,' the monkey flew at his throat with every mark of rage; but when he called him 'a good patriot,' the monkey expressed satisfaction, and caressed his master."

But the desire to counteract the chilly impression of that frigid Vauxhall of the Palais Royal has been gratified at the expense of chronology; it is necessary to go back a few years in the history of such resorts.

Several years, then, before the famous fête at the Winter Vauxhall the imitators of Torre had improved upon his example. That is, they had realized that the Vauxhall of London was so popular with the crowd because it had gardens as well as a rotunda, and that such resorts to be successful must cater for summer rather than winter amusement. Hence within a dozen years of the opening of Torre's Vauxhall there were established many other resorts which offered the added attraction of picturesque gardens.

Among the early pleasure gardens one of the most popular was that known as the Redoute Chinoise. And the high favour in which it was held was well deserved. The Chinese Redout was thoroughly well equipped, for, in addition to the inevitable rotunda, it had an excellent café, and its spacious gardens, which were enclosed by high walls, were famous for their well-kept flower-beds, their picturesque walks, their tree-encircled nooks, and their splendid tennis-courts. Owing to those tennis-courts and to the further fact that the gardens afforded many secluded retreats in the early hours of the day, the Chinese Redout was a favourite haunt of the comedian Fleury and his fellow actor Jean Dugazon. Fleury was an excellent tennis player and the instructor of Dugazon in the game, and when the two were not practising they found the garden a pleasant spot in which to rehearse their parts after breakfasting in the café.

At the time when the two actors were frequent patrons of the Chinese Redout all Paris was excited over the doings of the famous impostor Count Cagliostro and his beautiful wife. Fleury had been promised an introduction to the celebrated couple, but the promise was still unredeemed when he met them in an unexpected way. On entering the café of the Chinese Redout one morning with his friend Dugazon the young woman who presided at the pay-desk greeted the two in an excited and mysterious

manner. "Gentlemen," she said, "I have such news for you! Count Cagliostro is here. He came with his wife to breakfast. Take no notice; but go into the garden. Give Jacques a trifle, and he will procure you a sight of the great conjurer."

Jacques was soon discovered and duly tipped, and the three had started on their exploration when they were joined by the young woman from the café. "I forgot to tell you," she hurriedly remarked, "that Count Cagliostro requested we would not admit anybody to the gardens whilst he should be here. But I could not think of denying entrance to such good customers as you, gentlemen; and I told him that I would let no one in except two or three *conseillers de bailliage*, who are in the habit of coming. I don't know what may be your profession, gentlemen; but it struck me that you might possibly be *conseillers de bailliage*. At all events, you can easily pretend you are; for I should not wish him to know that I have told an untruth." "But, madame," said Fleury, "you forget that the count is a conjurer." "Ah!" said she, laughing, "conjurer as he is, he doesn't know the difference between Burgundy and Bourdeaux. I will answer for it he will not find you out."

Encouraged by such confidence in their powers of impersonation, the two actors resumed their quest. Fleury confessed that he was consumed with anxiety to see the mysterious count, and attributed to

his companion an even keener desire to gaze upon Cagliostro's beautiful wife. Their exploration soon had a successful issue.

Fleury shall tell how. "We observed a little movement (which I should find it difficult to describe), regularly given to the branches of a lilac tree. The branches swung backward and forward as regularly as the pendulum of a clock. At the same time we perceived a sort of wand rising and falling, though we could not see the hand that held it; the foliage of the lilac tree, and some thick clustering shrubs, intercepted our view. The measured movement above mentioned was not unaccompanied by sound; some words were uttered, but they were in a foreign and to us unintelligible tongue. We prepared ourselves to witness some sublime mystery, and we eagerly hurried along the little garden path, which, after several turnings and windings, suddenly opened on a grass-plot. Judge, reader, what was our amazement when we beheld the grand Copt, the awful Cagliostro, playing at see-saw! . . . grotesquely bestriding the swing, which formed the favourite diversion of the little boys and girls who visited the *Redoute* on Sundays. Madame was setting the machine in motion, whilst the count held in his hand a light switch or cane, which he used in the way of a horsewhip, at the same time uttering some incomprehensible words. To what language these words belonged I do not pretend to say; they were

probably a compound of Greek, Latin, Hungarian, and Italian, for the count spoke all these languages."

Forgetting the dignified character they had been requested to assume, the two actors gave way to a burst of laughter. Of course that put an end to the ludicrous performance, but Cagliostro, jumping from the see-saw and facing the intruders, had a ready excuse for his childlike behaviour. If they were philosophers, he said, they would admit that the see-saw was not a bad aid to the digestion. Dugazon could not so quickly recover his sobriety to admit the force of that plea, but his inclination to argue the point was speedily overborne by the count's wife, who turned on the actor the effectual artillery of her lovely dark eyes and overwhelmed him. At this juncture Fleury intervened with an apology, adding that Cagliostro's indulgence in such innocent amusements did him great honour, and requesting that he and his lady would favour him and his friend with their company for a quarter of an hour. The request was at once granted, and for a brief while the four walked hither and thither about the garden discussing various matters with the familiarity of friends. Dugazon and Fleury in turn led the conversation to Cagliostro's own doings, to his cures of the sick, his summoning of spirits from the unseen, and other mysterious proceedings, but to each question the count had a ready answer and

stoutly maintained the purity of his motives and the genuineness of his knowledge.

Never before had the garden of the Chinese Redout witnessed such a singular scene. The account Fleury gives of the interview is unique in the copious Cagliostro literature for the glimpse it gives of the impostor at close quarters and in undress. And to the end the two actors flattered themselves that they had successfully maintained their pose as *conseillers de bailliage*; Fleury, indeed, was confirmed in that supposition by Cagliostro's apparent desire to turn the conversation when it touched upon the question of law in relation to his cures of the sick. But there was a surprise in store for the actors. When the stipulated fifteen minutes had expired, Cagliostro, consulting his watch, suddenly broke out into a quotation from the "Tartuffe" of Molière —

" certain devotions

Recall me to my closet; you'll forgive me
For leaving you so soon " —

and offering his arm to his wife, he, with a profound bow, took leave of his new friends with the remark: "Adieu, M. Fleury! Adieu, M. Dugazon! You wished me to act a part for your entertainment — but you have been acting for mine."

That dislocation of social life which prevailed more or less during the turmoil and terror of the

French Revolution naturally reacted adversely on the pleasure gardens of Paris. The rougher classes were provided with ample excitement by the Jacobins Club, street assaults, raids on the mansions of royalty and nobles, and the unceasing clanking of the guillotine; the more refined citizens were, in the main, too uncertain of their hold on life to care over much about amusements.

Hence it was not until the Revolution had ceased to be a terror to life and Paris once more rejoiced in orderly government under the control of Napoleon that the pleasure garden resumed its place among the amusements of the city. In the early years of the nineteenth century, then, such resorts were numerous, chief among them being the Frascati Gardens and the two Tivoli's. Of the first a concise account is given in the diary of an Englishman who visited the French capital in 1802. "After dinner," he wrote, "we visited Frascati, which is a kind of tea gardens, situated on the Boulevards, at the extremity of the Rue de la Loi. This garden is not very extensive, but is laid out with much taste, and exhibits, in its narrow space, a surprising variety of objects. At the entrance, a kind of gallery lined with mirrors leads into a square building, divided into several apartments, all of which are fitted up for the purpose of taking refreshments. The garden itself is divided into two parts, by a central walk or alley. On each side of this walk are

erected small pillars, round which are entwined woodbines, passion flowers, and several other species of parasitic plants. The capitals of these pillars are connected by rods of iron, to which are attached the names of the most celebrated ancient and modern poets; among which I particularly distinguished my countrymen Pope, Dryden, and Milton. At the end of the central walk, there is a beautiful piece of rock-work forming a grotto, over which is stretched a pavilion of painted canvas. The remainder of this extremity of the garden is judiciously diversified with miniature eminences, covered with shrubs, with shady walks, and arbours; the whole adorned with statues, each of which holds in its hand a small lamp. This is a truly tasteful mode of illumination, and I could easily give credit to our valet's assertion, that the lighting of these lamps produces a very fine effect. No money is required for admission into Frascati. The profits of the proprietors arise from the sale of ices and other refreshments."

Different conditions prevailed at both the Tivoli Gardens. Those resorts were evidently keen rivals, and each was situated in the Quartier de l'Europe, a district so named because its chief thoroughfares were christened from the capitals of Europe. One of them was visited by that diarist whose description of the Frascati Gardens is quoted above, and he discovered that while he could enjoy the delights of

the former gratis, admission to the Tivoli could be obtained only by the purchase of a ticket. But there was ample compensation for the investment. That Tivoli consisted of a large garden on an elevated terrace where diverse entertainments were provided. The company was numerous, and various groups were engaged in such "frivolous amusements" that the visitor imagined he had been transported to a boisterous English fair. In one corner elderly and well-dressed people were riding on roundabouts, in another see-saws of the type favoured by Cagliostro attracted many patrons, while elsewhere a large crowd gaped and laughed at the grimaces of a merry-andrew. Nor were those all the amusements of this pleasure garden; several groups found enjoyment in playing at battledore and shuttlecock, more adventurous spirits tried their skill on tight-ropes, and in the centre of the garden a large platform was occupied by two or three hundred dancers.

Notwithstanding those numerous attractions it would seem that the other Tivoli, situated on the Rue de Clichy not far from the site now occupied by the Casino de Paris, was a still greater favourite with the Parisians of the early nineteenth century. "This," said a visitor of 1815, "is the most beautiful public garden in Paris. The price of admission was three francs, fifteen sous, on account of the fireworks, which exceeded anything I had either wit-

nessed or imagined; the music and singing were excellent, and some rope-dancing concluded the evening. These gardens are very tastefully laid out, with shady walks and pavilions; a profusion of sweet-scented flowers exhale a delightful fragrance, and throughout the whole are interspersed statues and lamps; making it, according to the Parisian expression, a Little Elysium. Waltzes and cotillions were danced by private individuals with the elegance of taste peculiar to French females." According to this chronicler, that Tivoli was patronized by the better classes.

Perhaps one of the chief secrets of the popularity of the gardens in the Rue de Clichy may be found in the fact that they were the scene of several spectacular balloon ascensions in the summer of 1807. They were made by Garnerin in August and September, and as the aeronaut had many rivals the ascensions attracted large crowds of unfriendly as well as friendly spectators. Each ascent took place at night, one at eleven and the other at half-past ten o'clock, and at both times the event was made the occasion of a grand gala at the gardens. Garnerin described the sight as it appeared to him from the balloon. "I was in the full force of my ascension when the fireworks of Tivoli were let off; the rockets scarcely seemed to rise from the earth; Paris, with its lamps, appeared a plain, studded with luminous spots." As those were the early days of

aerial exploits, it may easily be imagined that such feats as Garnerin's gave the Tivoli of the Rue de Clichy an enormous advantage over the rival gardens.

A third Tivoli figures in the history of the pleasure gardens of Paris, for the Château Rouge on the Rue de Clinancourt was also known as the Nouveau Tivoli. This resort could lay claim to historical associations of a unique kind. The pavilion was none other than the building erected by Henry IV for his fair mistress, Gabrielle d'Estrées, in the last decade of the sixteenth century, and seems to have been occupied by her during the last seven years of her brief life. There were born several of the children she bore to the king, and hence the place must have possessed a peculiar interest for that royal lover, who was so attached to his beautiful mistress that when she died he set a new example in regal mourning by wearing black instead of the usual violet. Many generations later the pavilion acquired another notable association, for it was within its walls the preliminaries of the Treaty of Paris were signed.

But the conductors of the New Tivoli did not rely merely upon historical associations. The gardens were, as usual, profusely decorated with lamp-bearing statues and thickly studded with trees and shrubs and flower-beds, while the amusements included music and dancing, swings and billiard-tables,

shooting-galleries and buffets, and a *Pont des Soupirs* specially designed for the delectation of sighing lovers. The inevitable fireworks, too, often figured in the programme of the evening.

At the period when the New Tivoli was at the height of its popularity many other pleasure gardens of a similar type were in great favour with the Parisian. Two of these, the Château des Fleurs and the Jardin d'Hiver, were situated in the Avenue des Champs Elysées, and a third, the Jardin Mabilie, was to be found in the Avenue Montaigne. They had, of course, many features in common, but the Winter Garden stood in a class by itself by reason of the fact that the entire area was roofed with glass. All round the huge structure ran a graceful gallery filled with flowers, and the floor space was laid out as a garden in which orange trees and rare exotic plants were varied by fountains and grottos and groups of statuary. "Indeed," exclaimed an enthusiastic eulogist, "but for the welcome absence of the tiger and cobra-capello, it would need no great stretch of the imagination to believe one's self here transported to the most luxuriant regions of the East. Here the camellia, the yucca, and the cactus will meet the visitor's eye in juxtaposition with the palm-tree, the araucania, and the banana. An aviary filled with exotic birds is to the right; in the centre of the garden is a grass-plot, extending to a romantic grotto; while the few walls that con-

nect some portions of the iron framework are completely concealed with mirrors and lined with *passifloras* and other creeping plants.' The large transepts were reserved for balls and concerts all the year round.

While the pleasures of the Jardin d'Hiver, then, were not restricted to any one season of the year, it was different with the Château des Fleurs and the Jardin Mabille. These were summer resorts, and the first, as may be inferred from its name, was distinguished for its wealth of floral beauty. In addition each garden was well equipped with those accessories thought to be essential for such places — a profusion of lights, numerous cafés, platforms for dancing, orchestras, shooting-galleries, and other pastimes. In these gardens, then, it is easy to discern the origin of the café-chantant, by which they have been replaced in popular favour.

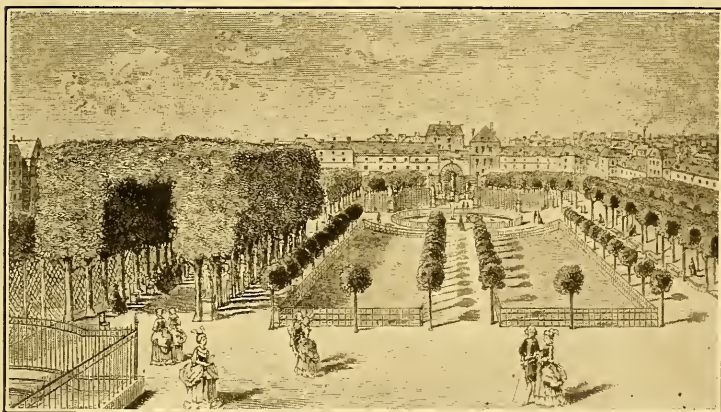
Many years before either of the Tivoli's or the Château des Fleurs catered for the amusement of all classes there already existed in the city a garden which it was the ambition of most Parisians to visit. That famous pleasance was none other than the tastefully laid out grounds which surrounded the house Beaumarchais built for himself on the Boulevard which now bears his name. The garden of the famous dramatist was the wonder of Paris during the latter part of the eighteenth century, but no one was allowed to visit it except on the production of

a special card signed by Beaumarchais himself. According to Georges Cain, his friend, Victorien Sardou, delights to narrate how he, when a boy of seven, invaded that famous garden. By that time the fencing was much decayed, and one day the future playwright caught a glimpse of the garden through a crack in the palings. "So he and another lad of his own age wrenched away a paling with their hoop-sticks, and in a delight of terror slipped into the unknown domain. What an amazement! They found themselves in a Sleeping Beauty's realm. Weeds, lianas, branches, trees, had grown over everything. It was a flora and fauna of the virgin forests; rabbits, birds and butterflies were its denizens; and Robinson Crusoe was not more surprised in exploring his island than these two youngsters in wandering about this jungle." Of course the glories of the garden as a garden were departed, and now the site is wholly obliterated by drab houses and commonplace shops.

When it was stated at the beginning of this chapter that Torre, the enterprising proprietor of the earliest Vauxhall, appears to have been responsible for that change in *al fresco* amusements which set in about the middle of the eighteenth century, it had not been forgotten that the Parisian had long enjoyed the liberty of the gardens of the Palais Royal, the Tuileries, and the Luxembourg. The first was at one time the fashionable promenade of the city,



ENTRANCE TO BEAUMARCHAIS' GARDEN.



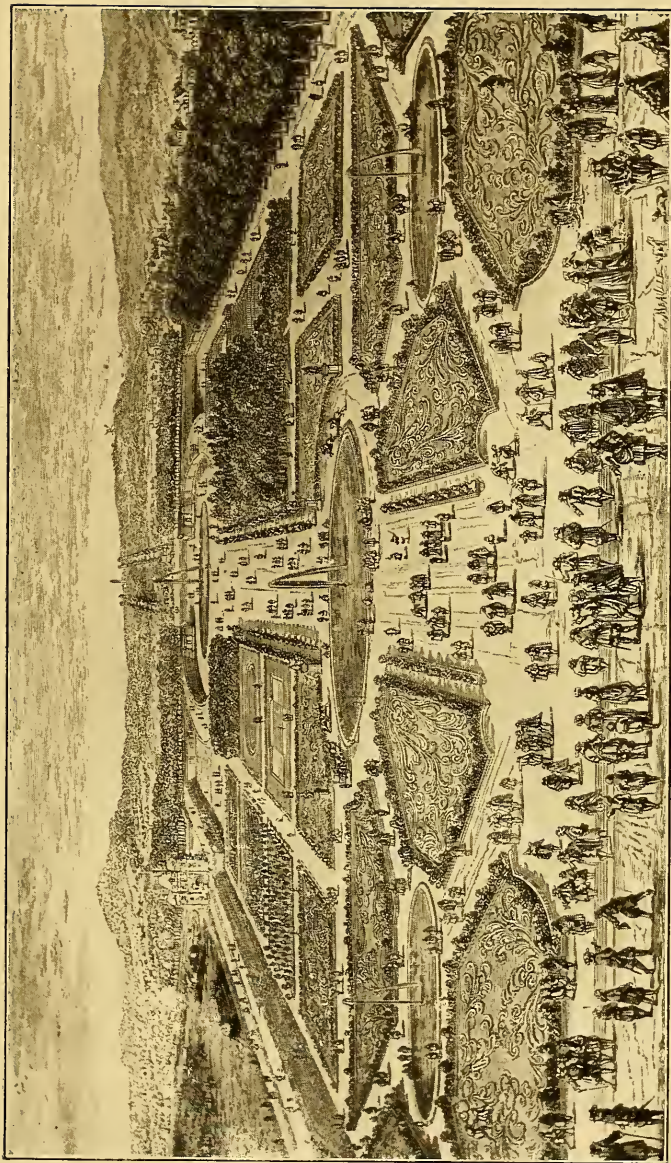
GARDEN OF THE PALAIS ROYAL.

while the second was a more popular rendezvous and the third the resort of the studios. Among these public gardens, then, that of the Tuileries was the favourite with the greater number, and many are the descriptions of the animated scenes witnessed there in the eighteenth century. It was there, according to Montesquieu, that "the race of Quidnuncs" assembled, men who were of no use to the state but who thought themselves important because they harangued upon glorious projects and talked of grand interests. But there were more frivolous saunterers in those gardens. "What can be more charming," exclaimed another writer, "than these serried ranks of beautiful women who line the noble avenue of the Tuileries on a summer evening, and during the fine days of spring and autumn! The groups of people, all possessing some special variety of attraction, exchange a continuous series of ideas which charm the mind, as the beauty of those who give utterance to them delights the eye." And still another annalist of the social life of Paris dilated with enthusiasm on the display of dress and the good-humoured badinage to be seen and heard in that resort.

But Arthur Young has preserved a different picture of the Tuileries. Walking there on a January morning of 1790 he saw Louis XVI being escorted to and fro as a prisoner, attended, it is true, by a page and officer of his household, but strictly

guarded by half a dozen grenadiers. "The doors of the gardens," Young added, "are kept shut in respect to him, in order to exclude everybody but deputies, or those who have admission tickets. When he entered the palace, the doors of the gardens were thrown open for all without distinction, though the Queen was still walking with a lady of her court. She also was attended so closely by the *gardes bourgeoise*, that she could not speak, but in a low voice, without being heard by them. A mob followed her, talking very loud, and paying no other apparent respect than that of taking off their hats wherever she passed, which was indeed more than I expected. Her majesty does not appear to be in health; she seemed to be much affected, and showed it in her face; but the king is as plump as ease can render him." Young also noted the little garden which had been railed off for the use of the Dauphin, and saw that unfortunate lad busy with his hoe and rake while a couple of grim grenadiers kept guard.

Royal comedy as well as royal tragedy has figured in the history of the Tuileries gardens. In November, 1820, Caroline of Brunswick, the princess who had the misfortune to become the wife of George IV and the infatuation to bestow every kind of favour upon her Italian courier Bergami, escaped being divorced from her worthless husband on a technicality which was resorted to because a verdict of guilty would probably have led to a popular up-



THE TUILERIES GARDENS.

rising in England. The trial of the Queen, and especially the evidence which incriminated her with the handsome Bergami, was followed with keen interest by Parisians, and when it was reported that the hero had taken refuge in their city all classes bent themselves to the pastime of Bergami-hunting. The hue and cry reached its height in the Tuileries gardens one fine afternoon when the prospect of seeing Queen Caroline's lover caused a great crowd to assemble. "It was a misfortune," stated a periodical of the time, "for a man to have anything of an Italian physiognomy, garnished with mustachios, hedged in with umbrageous whiskers, and set upon a pair of broad shoulders, for he ran the risk of being pointed out as Bergami himself, or at least as a striking likeness to him, and consequently became an object of most obtrusive and annoying observation. Towards four o'clock, no Bergami appearing, some *mauvais plaisant* contrived to direct the attention of those around him to a jolly, plump, good-humoured looking woman, about forty, seated upon one of the chairs, and without anything remarkable in person or dress, and in a very short time the whole concourse of persons who were in the garden, probably to the amount of fifteen hundred or two thousand, surrounded the *incognita*." But the frail Caroline was not in Paris; she was in London enjoying her triumph over her royal spouse.

Perhaps the chronicler who described the Luxem-

bourg garden as the resort of thinkers based his generalization on that incident in the career of Jean Jacques Rousseau to which reference has already been made. That sentimentalist, it will be remembered, used to spend his mornings wandering to and fro in that garden committing poetry to memory, and such an association does give some warrant for the legend which credited the thinkers of old Paris with a partiality for the Luxembourg. It was certainly a much quieter retreat than the gardens of the Palais Royal or the Tuileries, and its distance from the centre of the city preserved it from becoming the promenade of fashion and frivolity.

Even to this day the Luxembourg garden retains much of that Renaissance beauty which it acquired under the planning of Solomon Debrosse, who designed the palace and laid out the grounds for Marie de Médicis in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. Something of the old-world charm has no doubt been destroyed by the children's playground, and the overloading of the terraces and walks with modern sculpture, but the exquisite Fontaine de Médicis still remains, and there are yet many unspoilt nooks and corners which seem to exhale the spirit of the past. Although in so many respects a book of the modern age, George Moore's "Memoirs of my Dead Life" reflects not a little of that delight which the natives of old Paris took in the grounds surrounding the palace of Henry IV's widow. In

his early manhood he wondered whether there was anything better worth doing than to sit in those alleys of clipped limes and listen to the music of the fountains and watch the summer sunlight. "When one tires of watching the sunlight there is no greater delight than to become absorbed in the beauty of the balustrades, the stately flights of steps, the long avenues of clipped limes, the shapely stone basins, every one monumented in some special way." And when those pleasures failed there were the odd frequenters of the garden to study — the man who fed the sparrows with crumbs held between his lips, the eccentric who wandered about in the costume of a Robin Hood, the elderly couples who played football, and many more.

During the topsy-turvy days of the French Revolution an effort was made to transform that stately pleasance into a mere pleasure garden of the commonest type. Many of the finest trees were ruthlessly felled to make space for cafés and cheap dancing-halls, but the return of ordered government happily put an end to such wanton plans.

That Parisians had the free use of such gardens as those of the Palais Royal, the Tuileries, and the Luxembourg makes it easier to understand why the imitations of the Vauxhall and the Ranelagh of London did not attain either the long history or the success of their prototypes. And when once the idea was evolved of combining the café with the concert

it was inevitable that the pleasure gardens as such, notwithstanding lamp-bearing statues and balloons and fireworks, should gradually be numbered among the things of the past.

CHAPTER IX

STREET CHARACTERS

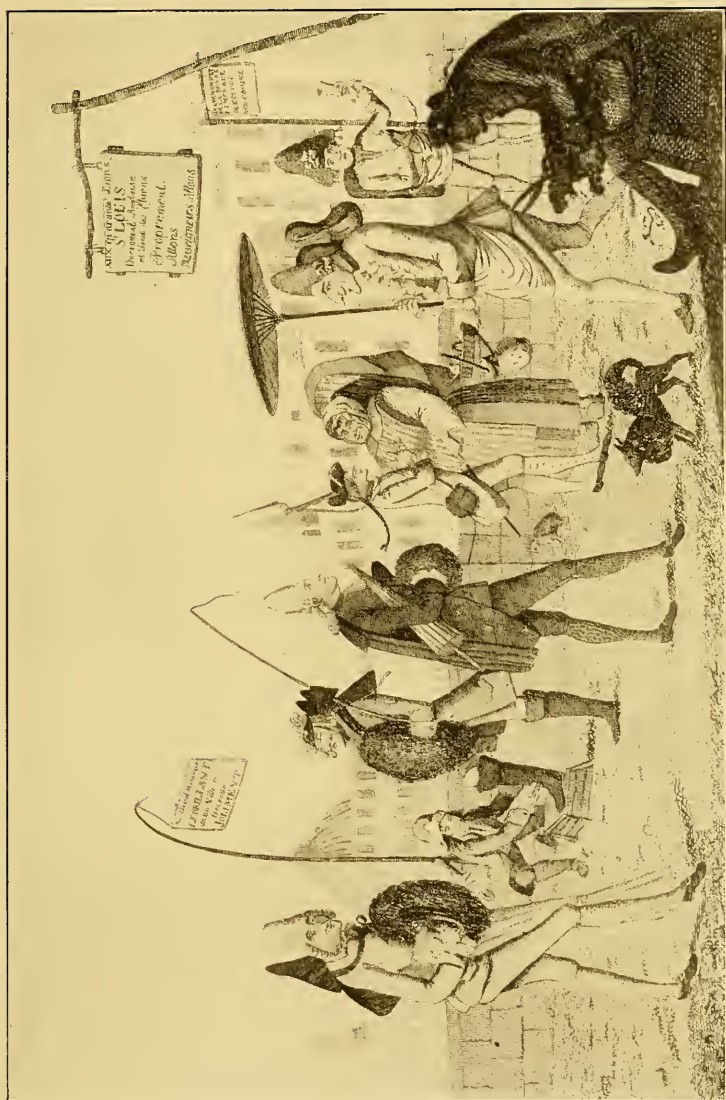
BEFORE the pleasure garden had come into existence, and contemporaneously with the cheaper entertainment provided by the grounds of the Palais Royal, the Tuileries, and the Luxembourg, the economical or poorer Parisian was not entirely destitute of amusement. From the middle of the seventeenth century the life of the city was brightened by a succession of street characters whose entertainments were doubtless a notable relief to the routine of the daily task.

Those nomads of the streets were, indeed, a revival. Strictly speaking, their ancestry dates back to classical times, for it is well known that they were a conspicuous feature of the life of ancient Greece and Rome. Aristophanes has preserved the memory of the mountebank who sold rings as a preventative or cure for the bites of serpents, and Plutarch and other writers made many allusions to the tumblers, jugglers, quacks, and fortune-tellers of their day. Most of these types figure in the mediæval history of Paris; we catch brief glimpses of them declaiming verses from their rude wooden platforms or gesticulating to the sound of instruments, but

they seem gradually to merge and disappear in the procession of miracle plays and mimed mysteries. When those miracle plays and mysteries at last gave place to the theatre of the secular drama, the street performer reappeared in the life of the city in a guise which linked him to his classical prototype.

And nowhere was he so much in evidence as on the Pont Neuf. That is easily explained. Ample evidence has already been adduced of the narrowness and congestion of the streets of old Paris, and Voltaire has been cited as complaining so late as 1749 that the city lacked open spaces and "roomy cross-ways." It will be remembered, also, that the one exception to this condition was made in favour of the bridges and quays of the Seine. Now it must be borne in mind that, notwithstanding its name, the Pont Neuf is by far the oldest bridge over the river, dating, as it does, from the early years of the seventeenth century. Such being the case, and remembering that the structure is really two bridges connected by a spacious island, it is not difficult to understand why the Pont Neuf soon became a favourite resort with the Parisian. As, also, it was for a long period the only bridge linking the left bank with the right bank, it was natural that dense throngs of people were constantly passing to and fro.

These were ideal conditions for the street vendor and mountebank, and that they availed themselves of them to the utmost is cogently illustrated by a



SCENE ON THE PONT NEUF.

drawing of the seventeenth century. This picture of the island of the Pont Neuf shows that the spaces outside the railings of Henry IV's statue were closely occupied by small stalls devoted to the sale of various articles, and that the opposite side of the road was pre-empted by showmen and quacks. Some of the latter are mounted on diminutive platforms while they dilate on the beauties of a series of pictures suspended from a post, but the centre of the drawing is given up to a kind of stage-caravan on wheels which is occupied by a couple of musicians and two other men who are selling their wares to the onlookers.

Although this drawing belongs to a slightly later period, it may be accepted as a not unfaithful delineation of the scene which might have been witnessed daily on the Pont Neuf at the time when the most famous of Parisian street characters was at the height of his renown. This was Jean Salomon, who, however, hid his identity under the title of Tabarin, and thus gave to the language of France a word which now figures in all dictionaries as a synonym for "a merry-andrew, a buffoon."

Tabarin was one of the first as well as the most notorious of the frequenters of the Pont Neuf. Born about 1584, he was a young man of some twenty summers when the bridge was completed, and, as he retired from his strenuous occupation in 1628, he was a well-known figure in the street life of Paris

for nearly two decades. He did not court popular favour single-handed; on the contrary, he was the partner of Philippe Girard, otherwise the quack doctor known as Mondor, and there were occasions — weekly, in the latter part of his career — when he had the assistance of his wife and others for more elaborate performances. A contemporary portrait shows him dressed as a clown and brandishing a wooden sword. He wore a moustache and a pointed beard and affected a soft felt hat which his nimble fingers twisted into countless amusing shapes.

While Mondor was responsible for the concoction of the quack remedies sold on the Pont Neuf — remedies which were doubtless no more harmful or efficacious than those bottles of Seine water mixed with a little nitre purveyed by that successor of the eighteenth century of whom Voltaire remarked that he could only be reproached with “ selling the water of the Seine at too high a price ” — and despite the occasional assistance of other performers, the chief attraction for the crowd was Tabarin himself. He was the persuasive orator without whose jokes and impromptu eulogies Mondor would have had few sales. That, seeing he was a Parisian and the time was the first quarter of the seventeenth century, many of his jokes were coarse or indecent is not surprising, but there is ample testimony that they also had the flavour of genuine wit, for Tabarin’s sayings were praised by such critics as Boileau, La



A MOUNTEBANK OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Fontaine, and Voltaire. Some of his "works" have survived — broad farces and dialogues which have gone through many editions and been learnedly annotated by serious savants. The versatile "barker" survived his retirement for some five years and had the pleasure of seeing his daughter married to one of the most popular comedians of the day.

By the eighteenth century most of the other moderately open spaces of the city had been pre-empted by the successors of Tabarin. One picture of the time, for example, depicts a richly-attired mountebank haranguing a numerous crowd from a stand at the corner of the Place du Louvre. His scenic background sets forth that he has been duly licensed by the police authorities, and indeed his air is wholly that of a man who has the law on his side. He wears the wig and three-cornered hat and brocaded coat and frills of the period, and while one hand clasps a formidable sword the other is raised in the easy gesture of the confident orator. A performing dog stands on its hind legs on his rostrum, and in the background his partner is offering for sale those articles for the exploitation of which the performing dog and the witticisms of the showman are but the accessories. The crowd is rapturously intent upon the proceedings, save for a street urchin in the foreground who is trying to make his dog emulate the feats of the canine on the rostrum.

Whatever amusement for the idle crowd was purveyed by these mountebanks, an ulterior motive of a mercenary character was ever in the background. Even the psalm-singer was no exception to the rule. As depicted by Charles Cochin, this entertainer of the streets used to provide himself with a curious structure which had the appearance of a double door, the inside panels of which were adorned with half a dozen sacred pictures. To these crude drawings the psalm-singer pointed in succession with a long wand while he was intoning the descriptive verses. Dressed in the simplest garb of the day, and with his own natural hair flowing over his shoulders, the singer affected a mien sufficiently pious to melt the most worldly heart, and his sanctified bearing was not without due effect on his hearers, if Cochin is to be trusted. But it was the love of lucre and not a passion for saving souls which prompted this serious entertainment. One of the listeners is holding up a coin to the musical evangelist, a hint on the part of the artist that the psalmist is not above selling copies of his pious ballads.

How much more, then, did the mercenary motive lurk behind the vocal efforts of those other singers who dealt frankly with secular themes. His pictures were innocent of Old or New Testament inspiration, but depicted a ball, a wedding, a feast, a glimpse of royalty, or a new-year's festival. And as the pictures, such were the songs. The singer,



THE PSALM - SINGER.

too, affected the most worldly of costumes, and usually had a companion who accompanied him on a musical instrument.

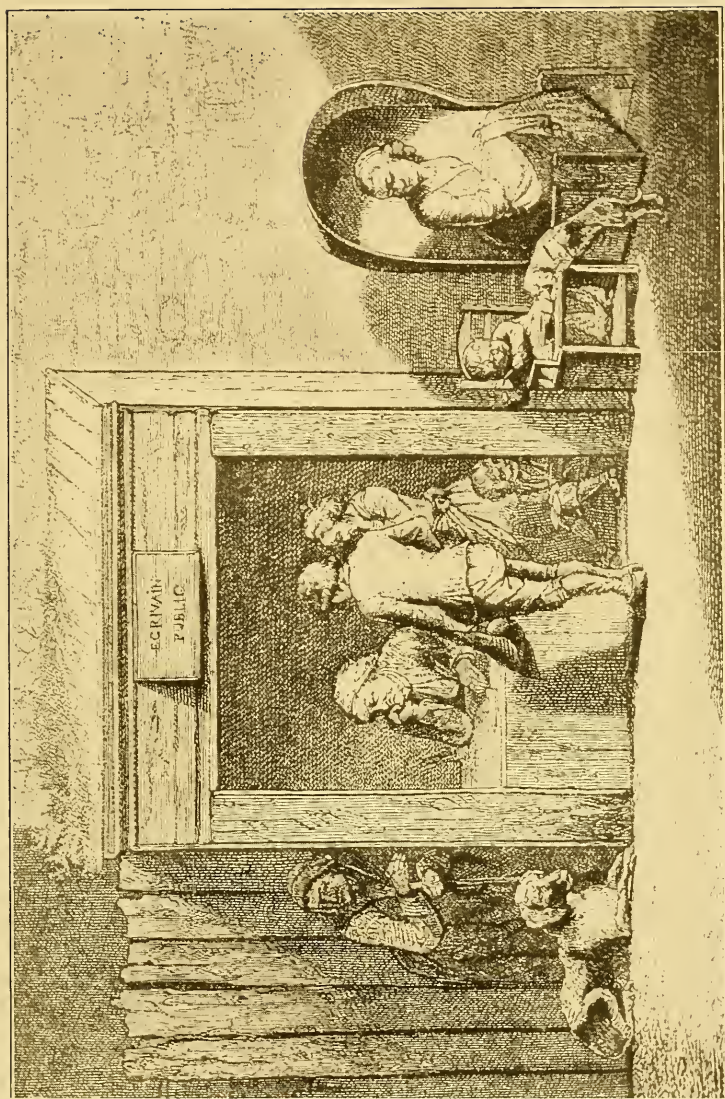
“ An elevated stand he takes,
And to the fiddler's squeak, he makes
A loud and entertaining lecture
On every wonder-working picture: —
The children cry, ‘ Hark! look at that!’
And folks put money in the hat;
Or buy his papers that explain
The stories they would hear again.”

Certain types of quacks persisted in the streets of Paris for many generations. The “ painless ” dentist of Tabarin's day, for example, had his counterpart in that tooth-doctor of the mid-nineteenth century who extracted teeth for five sous each to the accompaniment of strident organ and drum, while the jugglers of the seventeenth century were worthily represented by that descendant who threw five and ten and twenty pennies some sixty feet into the air and made them adhere to each other and caught them in his waistcoat pocket.

As the Parisians grew more utilitarian, however, the street character underwent a corresponding change. He had to offer something more than wit in exchange for the coin of the realm. And he found it necessary to specialize in some article which was not too costly, and, at the same time, was in general

use. This practical type of street character in Paris was exemplified by "l'illustre Mangin," the pencil-seller, who, as an orator, adequately sustained the traditions of Tabarin. He was said to have taken a university degree, a belief which may have had no surer foundation than his fondness for classical allusions, but whatever the extent of his learning there was no denying his fluency of speech. Unlike Tabarin, he did not confine himself to any one pitch in Paris, but paraded the various districts of the city in accordance with a fixed schedule, and had a specific day and hour for every quarter. Hence his cart with its organ and drum was a familiar object to all Parisians, as was also Mangin himself with his scarlet cloak and huge brass helmet crowned with an enormous bunch of black feathers. His style of oratory may be judged by this specimen:

"Ladies, gentlemen, children, enemies and friends! Buy my pencils. There are no other pencils like them on the earth or in the spheres. Listen! They are black! You imagine, of course, in the immensity of your ignorance—it is wonderful how ignorant people are capable of being, especially about pencils—that all pencils are black. Error! Criminal error! Error as immense and fatal as that of Mark Antony when he fell in love with Cleopatra. All other pencils are grey! Mine alone possess the merit of being truly black." Notwithstanding that and other invaluable qualities, Mangin sold his pen-



THE PUBLIC LETTER - WRITER.

cils — and sold them in huge numbers — for a sou each or ten sous a dozen.

Although the ghosts or descendants of many of the street characters of old Paris still haunt the city, there is one who has wholly disappeared. This is the man, generally well advanced in years, who presided in the little wooden booths which bore the legend, “*Scrivain Public*,” that is, public letter-writer. His was a busy and profitable occupation in those bygone generations when the accomplishment of writing was not enjoyed by the majority, even though his rates were only five sous for an ordinary letter, or twelve sous for a petition to the king “because it was necessary to make it more stylish.” The letter-writer’s booth was the secular confessional of Paris and rightly designated “*The Tomb of Secrets*.” The occupant was no ordinary penman; he could, on occasion, engross and scroll with the best, having a facile command of the various styles of handwriting suitable for the manifold necessities of his numerous clients. He was, too, often a wooer of the muse, and could turn a sonnet to give added force to a confession of love.

One such vicarious penman has been described by a historian of Parisian byways. He sat behind his little desk, the image of Discretion in flesh and blood. “Curious to see everything, you approached; a few specimens of petitions to the Chief of the State, drawn up on official paper and sealed

with wafers, gave you a foretaste of the master's dexterity. Moreover, you could read, in a position well exposed to view, some pieces of poetic inscription, deficient in neither rhyme nor even reason, and cleverly calculated to allure you forthwith. The running hand, the round hand, the English hand, and the Gothic hand alternated freely in the ingenious composition, not to mention the flourishings with which the lines ended, the page encased in ornamental spirals, the capitals complicated with arabesques, and so forth. This booth, a mere plank box, three feet square, whence issued during forty years an incalculable number of letters, petitions, and other documents, was situated in the quarter of Saint-Victor." Others were to be found in many other districts, but they and their occupants have alike vanished, another sacrifice of the picturesque on the altar of education.

But some human needs defy education and time alike. Hence many of the street characters depicted in the spirited drawings of Bourchardon have left descendants to this day. The gallery is well stocked, including the wood-cutter, the coffee-seller, the fishwoman, the water-carrier, the fruit and flower vendor, the street-cobbler, the broom merchant, the rat-catcher, the lottery tout, the knife-grinder, the chimney-sweep, the milkmaid, and many more. Some have disappeared and left no successors, but the street cries of modern Paris are, to

those who have ears to hear, full of suggestion of the past.

For, although the Paris of ideas is always changing and has a generous hospitality for what is new in thought, there is also a Paris of custom which is immemorially old and impervious to change. In nothing is that aspect of the French capital better represented than in its street characters and their centuries-old cries. These fill the day from dawn to dusk with such heraldings of their wares as have known no variation for countless generations. The Pied-Piper-like sound, for example, with which the goatherd of the city disturbs the silence of the dawn is not of the twentieth century but reminiscent of an age long passed away, and there are many other melodies — some musical and others not — which perpetuate the Paris of an earlier time. Even in the eighteenth century these street sounds were practically stereotyped. “You hear,” wrote a chronicler of that period, “shrill, piercing and deadening cries in every direction, as, for instance, ‘Live mackerel! just arrived!’ ‘Fresh herrings, fresh herrings!’ ‘They are piping hot!’ (This referred to cakes quite cold.) Add to these cries those of the dealers in old clothes, the sellers of parasols, old iron, and water-carriers. The men cry like women and the women as if they were men. There is one perpetual yelling, and it is impossible to describe the sound and the accent of all these mul-

titudinous voices when they are raised in chorus.” All things considered, then, and what with Tabarin and his tribe and the busy vendors of articles ranging from a broom to “ hot ” cakes, the street life of old Paris was not lacking in animation and entertainment.

CHAPTER X

FAIRS AND FÊTES

REFERENCE has already been made to the fact that the first coffee-house to figure in the history of old Paris was that which Pascal the Armenian opened in 1672 as an attraction at the Fair of St. Germain. That incident is doubly suggestive: it shows that the booth-keepers of those annual gatherings were always on the alert for novelties, and that in an attempt to exploit the new drink, as in so many other ways, the Fair of St. Germain set the fashion for the rival Fair of St. Lawrence.

But neither of those fairs, ancient though they were, could compete on the score of antiquity with the Fair of St. Denis. Among the countless charters of such institutions which have survived to modern times, by far the oldest is that by which Dagobert, king of the Franks, bestowed upon the monks of St. Denis the privilege of holding an annual market "in honour of the Lord and to the glory of St. Denis at his festival." That charter belongs to the first half of the seventh century, and hence anticipates by five centuries the earliest reference to the Fair of St. Germain.

As Dagobert, in addition to his devotion to the

Church, was an enthusiastic patron of the arts, it was natural that the Fair of St. Denis should be distinguished for its blend of religion and craftsmanship. Each year, then, it was inaugurated by a procession of monks from the abbey which passed in stately pomp between the rows of stalls richly laden with the merchandise and handiwork of many nations. The fair lasted for ten days, dating from the day following the festival of the saint whose name it bore. Five centuries later another fair began to be held at St. Denis. It originated in 1109, when Notre Dame was presented with some fragments of the cross. So vast were the crowds which gathered to adore these relics that it was impossible to accommodate them in the cathedral, and hence they were taken to the plain of St. Denis, where there was room for all. From the repetition of this *al fresco* ceremony there at last came into existence the annual market known as the Feast of the Parchment, which was opened by a procession of students headed by the Rector of the University. Before the sales commenced the Rector instructed the merchants to reserve such a quantity of parchment as he estimated would be needed for the use of the University during the ensuing year; that duty accomplished, the Rector retired, and the students then proceeded to disport themselves after the manner of their kind. No doubt those "young barbarians" were resourceful in providing congenial amusements

for each other; at any rate it does not appear that the Feast of the Parchment was distinguished for those various side-shows which were so large a part of the attractions of the Fairs of St. Germain, St. Lawrence, and St. Ovide.

Judging from such records as are still available, the oldest of these three was the Fair of St. Germain, of which the memory is perpetuated by that *Marché St. Germain* close to St. Sulpice. The earliest authentic reference to the fair dates back to 1176, when, as in the case of St. Denis, the market was associated with the abbey after which it was named. Other records show that it was still in existence in 1433, when it lasted for eighteen days. From that time, however, its observance seems to have been spasmodic, and it continued in a semi-comatose condition until in 1482 a permission to establish a new fair on the site of the gardens of the King of Navarre was granted by Louis XI. But, for many years, there was no hard and fast rule as to the duration of each annual gathering; it seems to have varied at the whim of the merchants who hired the stalls; and it was not until the eighteenth century that the fair was regularly opened on the third of February and as regularly closed on Passion Sunday.

Similar conditions prevailed in connection with the Fair of St. Lawrence, the earliest reference to which belongs to the year 1344. In the fourteenth

century and later it seems to have lasted for but a single day, but in the eighteenth century it was opened on the ninth of August and closed on the penultimate day of the following month. As with the Fairs of St. Denis and St. Germain, the Fair of St. Lawrence was originally connected with a religious order. The site on which it was held is now occupied by the courtyard of the Gare de l'Est as is recorded on a commemorative tablet on a pavilion to the left of the station.

But these fairs preserved their utilitarian character for many generations, for it was not until near the close of the sixteenth century that the low comedians, jugglers, and other entertainers began to make their appearance at those annual gatherings. When such wandering players were, in 1597, given authority to set up their booths and cater for the amusement of the crowd, the merchants who regarded the fair from a purely commercial standpoint were doubtless alarmed for the future. They may have imagined that business and pleasure were incompatible. The history of fairs proves that the introduction of such alien features as plays or puppet-shows was at first strenuously resisted. But that opposition did not continue for long; the merchants quickly discovered that the mountebanks and strong men attracted ever-increasing crowds, and that the larger attendance was all for the good of trade.

By the middle of the seventeenth century, then, when a poet named Loret set himself the task of penning a rhyming catalogue of the curiosities to be seen at the Fair of St. Germain, the list of non-commercial attractions was of a formidable length. It included harlequins, tumblers, dancers, giants, monkeys, and wild animals. But Loret may be allowed to call the roll:

*“ Citrons limonades, douceurs,
Arlequins, santeurs et danseurs,
Outre un géant dont la structure
Est prodige de la nature;
Outre les animaux sauvages,
Outre cent et cent batelages,
Les Fagotins et less guenous,
On voit un certain habile homme
(Je ne sais comment on le nomme)
Dont le travail industriel
Fait voir à tous les curieux,
Non pas la figure d’Hérodes,
Mais du grand colosse de Rhodes
Qu’à faire on a bein du temps mis,
Les hauts murs de Sémiramis,
Où cette reine fait la ronde;
Bref, les sept merveilles du monde,
Dont très bien les yeux sont surpris;
Ce que l’on voit à juste prix.”*

One of the earliest and most detailed descriptions of the aspect of the fair was penned by the zoologist Martin Lister, who visited Paris in 1698. “ We were in Paris,” he wrote, “ at the time of the Fair

of St. Germain. It lasts six weeks at least; the place where it is kept, well bespeaks its antiquity; for it is a very pit or hole, in the middle of the Faubourg, and belongs to the great abbey of that name. You descend into it on all sides, and in some places above twelve steps; so that the city is raised above it six or eight feet. The building is a very barn, or frame of wood, tiled over; consisting of many long alleys, crossing one another, the floor of the alleys unpaved, and of earth, and as uneven as may be: which makes it very uneasy to walk in; were it not the vast crowd of people which keep you up. But all this bespeaks its antiquity, and the rudeness of the first ages of Paris, which is a foil to its politeness in all things else now. The fair consists of most toy-shops, and Bartholomew-fair ware; also faience and pictures, joiner's work, linen and woollen manufactures; many of the great ribband shops remove out of Paris hither; no books; many shops of confectioners, where the ladies are commodiously treated. The great rendezvous is at night, after the play and opera are done; and raffling for all things vendible is the great diversion; no shop wanting two or three raffling boards. Monsieur, the Dauphin, and the other princes of the blood come at least once in the fair-time to grace it. Here are also coffee-shops, where that and all sorts of strong liquors are sold. Knavery here is in perfection as with us; as dexterous cut-purses and pick-pockets.

A pick-pocket came into the fair at night, extremely well-clad, with four lackeys with good liveries attending him: he was caught in the fact, and more swords were drawn in his defence than against him; but yet he was taken, and delivered into the hands of justice, which is here sudden and no jest."

That "very barn, or frame of wood" really comprised two structures after the style of a couple of market-halls placed side by side, and the whole was divided into nine thoroughfares which were again intersected by twenty-four aisles. Most of the shops or booths had little store-rooms over them, and there were numerous wells dug here and there for use in case of fire. The various alleys took their names from the trades to which they were chiefly devoted.

Although Dr. Lister does not appear to have been attracted by the harlequins and tumblers and dancers, there was one side show which as a zoologist he could not ignore. "I was surprised," he said, "at the impudence of a booth, which put out the pictures of some Indian beasts, with hard names; and of four that were painted, I found but two, and those very ordinary ones, viz., a leopard and a raccoon. I asked the fellow why he deceived the people, and whether he did not fear cudgelling in the end: he answered with a singular confidence, that it was the painter's fault; that he had given the raccoon to paint to two masters, but both had mistaken the beast; but however (he said) though the

pictures were not well designed, they did nevertheless serve to grace the booth and bring him custom." Such an ingenious excuse ought to have placated the disappointed zoologist. He did see two animals for his money, whereas many a fair booth with an enticing picture outside offered nothing more than vacuity within.

Had Dr. Lister visited the Fair of St. Germain a generation earlier he would have had an opportunity of seeing something which would have left him more surprised than those misleading pictures of Indian beasts. At the fair of 1662 one of the booths was occupied by an organist from Troyes named Raisin who exhibited a most marvellous spinet. This instrument, which was of his own manufacture, had three keyboards, one of which repeated such airs as were played on the other two, or even a different tune when commanded by Raisin. The performers were two of the organist's young children, who, when they had played an air on either of the nearest keyboards, were bidden to lift their hands from the keys, and then the third keyboard repeated at Raisin's request the tune heard a moment before. Nor was that all. If the organist shouted, "Stop, spinet!" the mysterious keyboard ceased to move; if he shouted, "Go on, spinet!" it resumed the air where it had broken off; if he demanded, "Play something else, spinet," the instrument at once obeyed. All the explanation Raisin

offered to his astonished patrons was to the effect that he had a spirit imprisoned in the instrument, and to add to the mystification he now and then made a pretence of winding up the spinet with a large key to the accompaniment of the sound of clacking wheels. Lest it should be imagined that the instrument was manipulated by some one hidden beneath in the floor of the booth, its position was frequently changed.

This was a venture infinitely more profitable than organ-playing at Troyes. The wonderful spinet was the sensation of the fair; Raisin's booth was packed to the doors at every performance; and for practical result the organist found himself the richer by some twenty thousand livres. And then the king, Louis XIV, commanded an exhibition of the marvellous instrument, which was accordingly taken to the court and as much admired by royalty and courtiers as by its patrons at the fair. When the performance was over, however, the king ordered the case of the instrument to be opened, and all the mystery was cleared up by the emergence of the youngest and smallest of Raisin's musically accomplished children! That "spirit" of the spinet became a popular actor in later life.

Many a player on the French stage, indeed, received his or her earliest training in one or other of the great fairs of Paris. In the seventeenth century, for example, there were the brothers Charles

and Pierre Alard who graduated as low comedians at both St. Germain and St. Lawrence before playing in comedy at the regular theatres. Charles Alard, however, preferred the fair environment to the more respectable atmosphere of the "legitimate" theatre, and died of a fall which he met while performing at the Fair of St. Lawrence; Pierre, on the other hand, ended his chequered career as a fake dentist.

Judging from the playbills and other old records so industriously gathered together by Émile Camperdon in his "*Les Spectacles de la Foire*," the Fair of St. Germain was at the height of its glory about the middle of the eighteenth century. Each of the years during the decade dating from 1740 was distinguished by the advent of some notable performer or the production of some bewildering novelty. The former included Nicolini Grimaldi, the grandfather of the famous clown of that name, and Jean Baptiste Nicolet, who began his successful career as the director of a marionette show. Grimaldi, who was described as an English tumbler and tight-rope dancer of Italian origin, and was given the expressive title of "Iron-leg," seems to have had many accomplishments and was a great "draw" at the fairs of 1740 and the following year. Among the notables who were attracted by his fame was the Turkish ambassador, whose presence in the audience so exhilarated Grimaldi that he wagered a fellow

performer that he would jump as high as the chandeliers. He won his bet, but he struck the chandelier with such force as to knock off one of its branches, which fell full on the face of the Turkish minister.

Wild animals and ingenious automatons figured largely among the other novelties of that flourishing decade. The former included two strange beasts exploited by a showman named Billard whose eloquent announcement was rich in startling adjectives. And that showman was equally copious in dwelling upon his own unrivalled accomplishments as a mathematician and juggler. His high-flown periods were successfully imitated by the exhibitor of a wonderful rhinoceros, hitherto thought to be an "apocryphal animal," by the owner of a pelican, "a rare bird from Turkey" which bled itself to nourish its young, and by the showman who solicited patronage for his marvellous chameleon. The latter was exhibited in a kind of cage with six arcades, in each of which was a coloured moving-figure. The chameleon paused before each figure in turn, at once assuming the hue of that before which it halted.

Some of the automatons were well calculated to amuse the easily pleased Parisian. One exhibitor in 1749 displayed three separate figures, the first being a country woman with a pigeon on her head and a glass in her hand. On the payment of a stipulated coin, the glass was raised to the beak of the bird, which emitted red or white wine at the choice

of the patron. The second piece of mechanism represented a grocer's shop, and the man behind the counter handed out such of his wares as were demanded. The third was a figure of a Moor, who, with a hammer in one hand and a ball in the other, played such tunes as were called for. At the same fair there was a rival attraction entitled "Spectacle Hydraulique," which, among other marvels, displayed a lantern of water with a lighted candle in the centre.

About a dozen years later the theatre of all these wonders was overtaken by a serious catastrophe. Sterne was in Paris at the time, and, in a letter to his wife, described the event in his usual sentimental style. "A terrible fire happened here last night, the whole Fair of St. Germain's burned to the ground in a few hours; and hundreds of unhappy people are now going crying along the streets, ruined totally by it. This Fair of St. Germain's is built upon a spot of ground covered and tiled, as large as the Minster Yard, entirely of wood, divided into shops, and formed into little streets, like a town in miniature. All the artizans in the kingdom come with their wares — jewellers, silversmiths, — and have free leave from all parts of the world to profit by a general license from the carnival to Easter. They compute the loss at six millions of livres, which these poor creatures have sustained, not one of which have saved a single shilling, and

many fled out in their shirts, and have not only lost their goods and merchandise, but all the money they have been taking these six weeks. ‘Oh! ces moments de malheur sont terribles,’ said my barber to me, as he was shaving me this morning; and the good-natured fellow uttered it with so moving an accent, that I could have found in my heart to have cried over the perishable and uncertain tenure of every good in this life.” It was in March, 1762, that Sterne was so moved by his barber’s exclamation, and hence the conflagration took place near the close of the fair for that year. During the intervening twelve months a new building was erected, but, although the galleries were of a more elegant type, and despite the added attractions of a dancing-saloon and a miniature Vauxhall, the fire of 1762 materially decreased the repute in which the Fair of St. Germain had been held for so many generations. Thenceforward it steadily declined in popular favour, and a year or so before the outbreak of the Revolution it was finally abandoned.

Most of the attractions at the Fair of St. Lawrence were of a nature greatly akin to those on view at its winter rival; if the summer fair had a distinct character of its own it consisted in the difference that it seemed able to boast a larger number of female performers of dubious reputation. Of course it also had its share of impositions, including the marvellous “*Homme à Deux Têtes*,” who would have

surprised Dr. Lister more than those Indian beasts, for this wonder of nature appears to have been nothing more than a wooden figure adorned with a superfluous head. It was an early example, in short, of those "sells" for which fairs are famous.

Perhaps, however, the regular patrons of the St. Lawrence festival gladly condoned such deceptions as the two-headed man in view of the many graceful-limbed and accommodating females engaged by the management. There was Gertrude Boon, for example, "the beautiful tumbler," whose well-turned legs and seductive figure played such havoc with the amorous feelings of a wealthy youth that he married her in haste and as quickly tired of his bargain. Gertrude, however, was not loath to return to the scene of her triumphs, where she doubtless made many more conquests of an equally profitable but less legally binding nature. Then there was Marie Lebrun, who seems to have had a small army of admirers, elderly and juvenile. Marie was nothing more than a dancer, and an ordinary dancer at that, for she confessed that her salary was inadequate to pay her dress and café bills; but she was young and blooming and complaisant. *Voilà tout!* On occasion, however, Marie could play the chaste virgin with the best. One elderly admirer, Chédeville by name, pursued her with tropical letters and offerings of silk stockings, but, according to her story in the police-court, she tore up his epistles and scorned

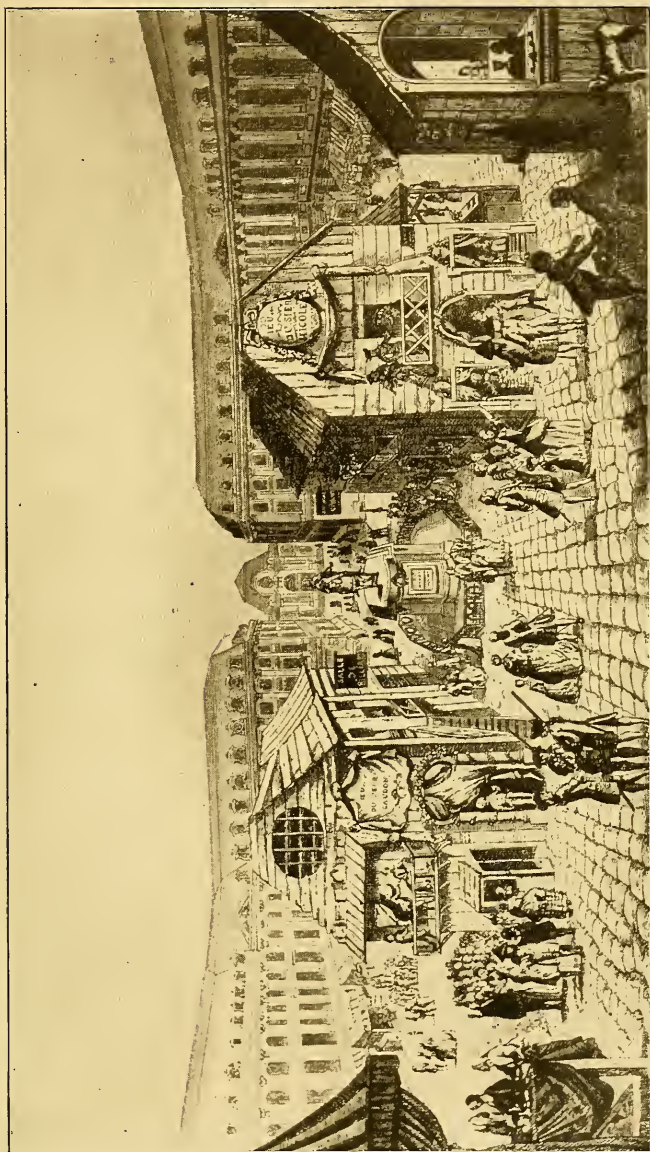
his contributions to her wardrobe. So far as language went, Marie's examination by the custodians of the law was distinctly to her advantage as compared with the choice and unprintable expressions credited under similar conditions to Mlle. Armand, another of the sirens of the Fair of St. Lawrence.

But it would be unjust to leave the impression that the famous summer fair of old Paris was nothing more than a happy hunting-ground for the roué. Apart from the serious trade carried on in pictures, pottery, all kinds of fabrics, and the products of the goldsmith, it did not fail to cater for those interested in the curiosities of science and physical illusion. The "Palais Magique" exhibited one year offered a large assortment of mysterious tricks and clever mechanical toys, while the "Nouveau Spectacles de Physique" of a subsequent season included many ingenious automaton. There was the "Sympathetic Lamp," for example, a two-branched affair which extinguished either of its lights in unison with the putting out of either of a couple of lighted candles held at a distance of from thirty to sixty paces. Another novelty was a musket which a member of the audience was allowed to cock and which, when laid upon a table, snapped its trigger at any moment previously decided upon. There was, too, an early example of the thought-reading automaton. Neither these wonders, however, nor the alluring Gertrudes and Maries were able to pre-

vent the Fair of St. Lawrence sharing the fate of its winter competitor.

Even had the Revolution not proved fatal to those fairs, the changing conditions of the late eighteenth century were not conducive to the preservation of institutions which belonged essentially to an earlier type of social life. For it must not be forgotten that the entertainments which are the most picturesque features of the fairs of old Paris were, after all, nothing more than the word "sideshows" suggests, that is, shows on the side and mere accretions to the serious business of selling and buying. In the lawless days of earlier centuries, and when means of communication and transport were scanty and inefficient, the fair held an important place in the life of a community by providing a yearly opportunity of replenishing wardrobes or household stores, and hence it was bound to decline when commerce became more carefully organized and permanent shops supplanted temporary booths.

All that accounts for the fact that the effort to establish a third great fair in Paris was made too late to be rewarded with enduring success. The effort in question was made in 1764, when, during the month of August, Parisians were bidden to the new Fair of St. Ovide, which was set up in that part of the city then known as the Place Louis le Grand but now familiar as the Place Vendôme. Judging from an old print, the organizers of the Fair of St. Ovide



THE FAIR OF ST. OVIDE.

set out with the resolve to cater for amusement rather than business. The picture does, it is true, represent a number of small tradesmen's booths in the background, but the prominence given to a café and a billiard saloon and the commanding proportions accorded to the theatres of Gaudon and Nicolet are conclusive that the fair was consecrated to pleasure and not commerce.

Two such popular entertainers as Jean Baptiste Nicolet and Claude Pierre Gaudon ought to have ensured generous patronage for the fair, for the former could count upon the favour of Louis XV and the latter was at one time the most-discussed man in Paris. Gaudon, who began life as a painter, no sooner took to the show business than he realized the importance of exploiting persons who were in the public eye. In pursuit of that policy he made an effort to secure for his theatre at the Fair of St. Ovide no less a public character than the popular Ramponeau, whose famous *al fresco* tavern has been described in a previous chapter. Ramponeau listened favourably to Gaudon's proposals and actually accepted a sum of money in advance of the payment he was to receive. But, at the last moment, he backed out of the engagement; he had "religious scruples," he said, against appearing in a theatre. Gaudon must have smiled grimly at the idea of an inn-keeper being afflicted with "religious scruples," and accepted his disappointment philosophically;

but when Ramponeau's "religious scruples" allowed him to make an appearance at another theatre, Gaudon thought it was time to put the law in action. The case was the talk of Paris; even Voltaire entered the lists on behalf of the pious Ramponeau; and the upshot was that the tavern-keeper was condemned to return the money he had pocketed prior to the development of his "religious scruples."

Naturally all that agitation and discussion was to the good of Gaudon and the Fair of St. Ovide. But in a few years the effect of that publicity died away, and by 1772 the fair seems to have been reduced to what was called the "Café des Nymphes" as its chief attraction. Notwithstanding the title, that café appears to have been a tame affair, for the principal amusement offered its patrons was nothing more than a gallery of young women arrayed in garments which were intended to caricature the fashions of the day. Perhaps, then, it is hardly surprising that popular interest in the Fair of St. Ovide gradually waned and finally ceased altogether.

It may have been that the matter of expense had something to do with the decay of Parisian fairs. According to the testimony of a native of the city the Parisian has always been economical in his amusements. "Where an Englishman," said this witness, "would readily have paid his guinea, the Parisian thought twice before he laid out a few

pieces of silver. What he delighted in most of all were gratuitous amusements, such as were to be had on public festivals. To take part in them, he did not regard fatigue or loss of time. In rain, wind, or dust, he would tramp from one end of the city to the other, and stand for hours to see the illuminations, fireworks, and other amusements." He was, in fact, demoralized for many centuries by the free entertainments of the numerous fêtes which distinguished the life of old Paris.

To do justice to those fêtes would be impossible save in a substantial volume. For to catalogue them all would mean writing the religious and commercial history of the city. As in the case of the fairs, it was the Church which took the lead in arranging street spectacles, to be followed by the trade guilds and the state authorities. By the middle of the eighteenth century the fête days appointed by the church had grown so numerous that Voltaire drew up a protest in the interest of social economy. "Twenty fête days too many in the country," he wrote, "condemn to inactivity and expose to dissipation twenty times a year ten millions of workingmen, each of whom would earn five pence a day, and this gives a total of 180,000,000 livres lost to the state in the course of a twelve-month. This painful fact is beyond all doubt." Voltaire might have given further point to his indictment by directing attention to the nearly two hundred trade corpora-

tions, each with its patron-saint who was celebrated by a fête at least once a year.

There were the cobblers, for example, who seem to have held their annual festival on the unorthodox date of the first of August. As they called themselves merely the "Society of the Trade of Cobblers," it may be that the honourable shoe-makers would not permit them to celebrate on the regular St. Crispin day. However, the cobblers had their procession all the same, bravely decked out no doubt, and perhaps as picturesque as any which wended its way through the streets of old Paris. The artist who perpetuated the fête of 1641 did not attempt a picture of the street scene or the ceremony in church without which no occasion of that kind was deemed complete; he confined his graphic labours to depicting the tavern interior where the day's proceeding culminated. The text of this broadside conveys the information that the cobblers dined sumptuously on turnip-soup, ox-feet, tripe, and "cow beef," but, judging from the picture, whatever may have been lacking in viands was amply compensated by the supply of liquids, for the serving-man who is replenishing the wine-cups from a huge bottle has a reserve of three other receptacles just as large to fall back upon. In the background, too, the crowded condition of the blackboard on which the tavern-keeper is chalking up the score is additional evidence that the cobblers were thirsty

clients. These realistic details enable one to appreciate that story of the cobbler who, when picking up a drunken man out of the gutter on a week day, exclaimed, "And to think that I shall be in this state on Sunday!"

Stately as were the processions arranged by the Church and picturesque as were the celebrations of the trade guilds, the most elaborate fêtes, especially in the eighteenth century, were those given in connection with royal births, betrothals, and marriages.

As Paul Lacroix wrote, the Parisians highly prized those inexpensive amusements. "They did not even care so much for the gratuitous distribution of wine and eatables as for the illuminations and fireworks. The tocsin of Notre Dame, sounded day and night for twenty-four hours, invited to the festival, so to speak, the inhabitants of Paris. In addition to the celebration of the king's fête day, which was kept with the same rejoicings year after year, there were special ceremonies given in connection with christenings and other occurrences associated with the royal family. Sometimes the Parisians were treated to a festival by a private individual, and, in May, 1722, the Duc d'Ossuna, ambassador of Spain, gave illuminations and fireworks which cost nearly forty thousand dollars in honour of the betrothal of the Infanta to Louis XV. There were a hundred illuminated boats, each with a band of music in it, rowing up and down the Seine. Bar-

bier says that 'no such crowd was ever assembled before in one place.' " Some twenty years later the makers of fireworks were given special permission to celebrate St. Louis' day with a grand display, but the experiment had to be abandoned as unprofitable owing to the objection of the Parisians to paying for what they had been accustomed to enjoy free of cost.

Among the royal fêtes of the second half of the eighteenth century the most splendid was that given in honour of the marriage of Marie Antoinette. It even eclipsed the festival which had marked the wedding of Louis XV's eldest son, when twelve huge pavilions were erected in as many districts of the city and adorned with tropical plants and flowers to provide suitable guest-rooms in which to regale all comers with music and refreshments.

From the hour when Marie Antoinette crossed the border of France her progress to the capital was marked at every stage by popular rejoicings. Her fresh young beauty captured all hearts. Field labourers left their toil to line the country roads along which she passed; villages and towns reared triumphal arches in her honour; the streets were strewn with flowers; and everywhere bands of maidens dressed in white awaited her coming with garlands of spring blossoms. "Madame," stammered a country curé who had forgotten his carefully prepared address, "do not be surprised at my want of

memory: you are fair and beautiful." And when Paris was reached at last, and the marriage was over, and the radiant young bride showed herself to the cheering crowds on the balcony of the Hôtel de Ville, the old Marshal de Brissac, pointing to the sea of humanity below, said with courtly grace: "Madame, the Dauphin may well be jealous. You behold before you two hundred thousand persons in love with you."

For the climax of all these rejoicings there was arranged a fireworks display of unprecedented grandeur. But what was intended to be a spectacle of unrivalled magnificence was suddenly changed into a scene of horror. The scheme of the fireworks was so vast that the engineer in charge was unequal to the control of its various parts; one section of rockets got entirely out of hand and began exploding directly onto the dense crowds without a moment's warning. Now, it so happened, that two of the thoroughfares off the Place Louis XV, where the exhibition was given, were blocked up, leaving only one narrow street for the escape of the frenzied mob. That street was quickly made impassable by a seething mass of humanity. "The confusion increased to such a degree," wrote a contemporary chronicler, "that one trampled over another, till the people lay one upon another in heaps; those who were undermost, stabbed those who lay above them, in order to disengage themselves. The pick-pockets

and robbers availed themselves of the confusion; and many ladies had their ear-rings torn out of their ears. A scaffold, erected near the palace of Bourbon, broke down with the over-weight of the spectators, who all fell into the river. There have been already taken up above a hundred drowned at St. Cloud, but many bodies have been driven beyond that place. The carnage was dreadful. It is computed that not less than three thousand are either killed, wounded, or rendered cripples for the remainder of their days." Happily that estimate proved to be an exaggeration, but the loss of life was sufficiently great to suggest the advisability of prohibiting future fêtes of a like character.

Twenty years later, however, all memory of that catastrophe had completely faded from the Parisian mind. And, indeed, enough had happened in the interval to obliterate the recollection of an even greater disaster. For on the pages of the history of France there had been engrossed those records which told of the convocation of the notables, the struggle between king and Parliament, the evolution of the National Assembly, the fall of the Bastille, the drafting of a new constitution, and the agreement that all France should bind itself together again in a new oath of loyalty.

What could be more legitimate excuse for another fête, and this time a fête without parallel in the history of the world? And for such a fête what

date was so fitting as the anniversary of the day on which the Bastille was overthrown?

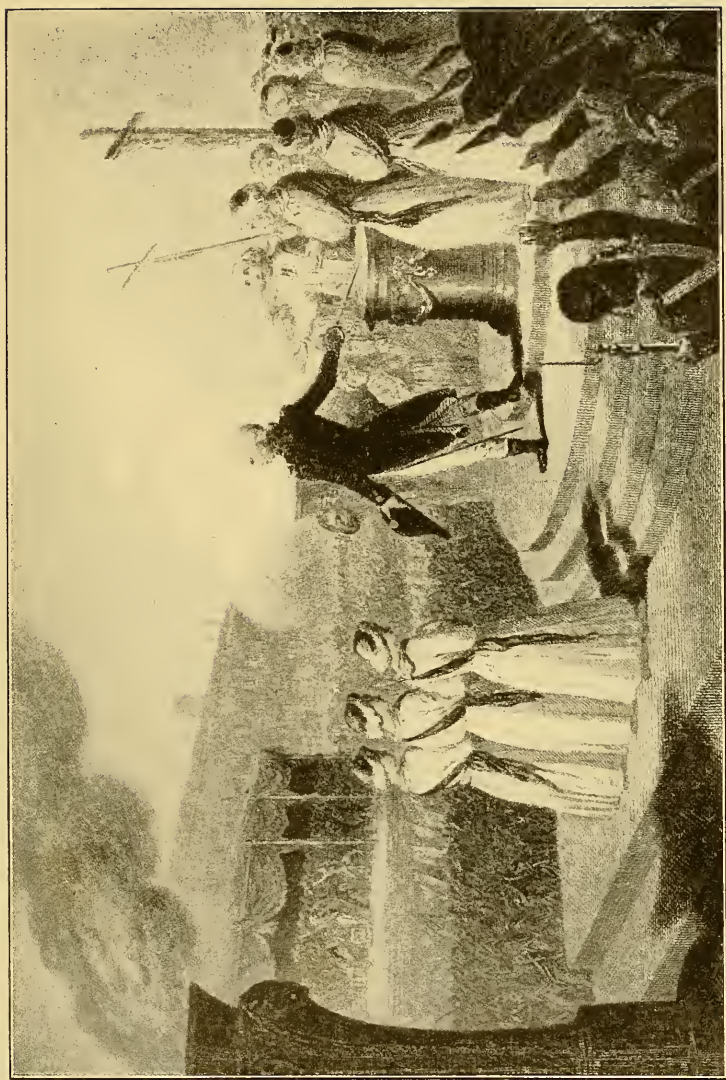
\ And so it was agreed that on the 14th of July of that year 1790 all France should be summoned to a monster festival to celebrate "the birth of freedom." The Champ de Mars, that spacious plain facing the Ecole Militaire which had hitherto been devoted to the reviews of troops and other military manœuvres, was chosen as the scene of the gathering, and invitations were sent to the eighty-four departments of the country, to the members of the National Assembly, and to the National Guard to assemble on the appointed day and take the oath of loyalty to the new constitution.

\ Even the preparation of the Champ de Mars for that notable occasion partook of the nature of a fête. It was a huge undertaking to transform that field of war into an amphitheatre for four hundred thousand spectators. The plain was more than half a mile in length and about two-thirds of a mile wide, and as the day for the fête drew near it seemed impossible that the thirty tiers of seats could be excavated and covered with timber in good time for the ceremony. Besides, there were stands to be erected for royalty and other high personages, and in the centre of the plain there had to be reared that mammoth Altar of the Fatherland whereon the oath of loyalty was to be sworn. The fifteen thousand hired labourers were slow at their task and re-

fused to work over-time. At their rate of work the arena could not possibly be finished for the appointed day.

But at that crisis a frenzy of good-will took possession of the Parisians. The project should not fail for lack of workers. One afternoon, then, when the hired workmen ceased their labours for the day, their spades and barrows were seized by hundreds of waiting patriots who continued industriously digging and wheeling until night fell. This example was infectious; the next and following days all unoccupied Paris poured out to the Champ de Mars. "As many as one hundred and fifty thousand workers; nay at certain seasons, as some count, two hundred and fifty thousand; for, in the afternoon especially, what mortal but, finishing his hasty day's work, would run! A stirring city: from the time you reach the Place Louis-Quinze, southward over the river, by all avenues, it is one living throng. So many workers; and no mercenary mock-workers, but real ones that lie freely to it: each Patriot stretches himself against the stubborn glebe; hews and wheels with the whole weight that is in him." And thus the Champ de Mars, with its thirty tiers of seats and its gigantic Altar of the Fatherland, is ready betimes for the great day.

With the dawn of July fourteen all Paris was astir. The vast spaces of the arena were soon filled to overflowing by joyous crowds in holiday garb, and



FÊTE OF THE FEDERATION.

meantime, at seven o'clock, near the tumbled ruins of the Bastille, the procession of the chief actors was marshalled into order and started for the Champ de Mars. The deputies from the departments, the national guards, the members of the assembly, the representatives of the army, with presidents and electors, made an imposing pageant thirty thousand strong, which passed through the decorated streets with banners flying and to the strains of inspiring music.

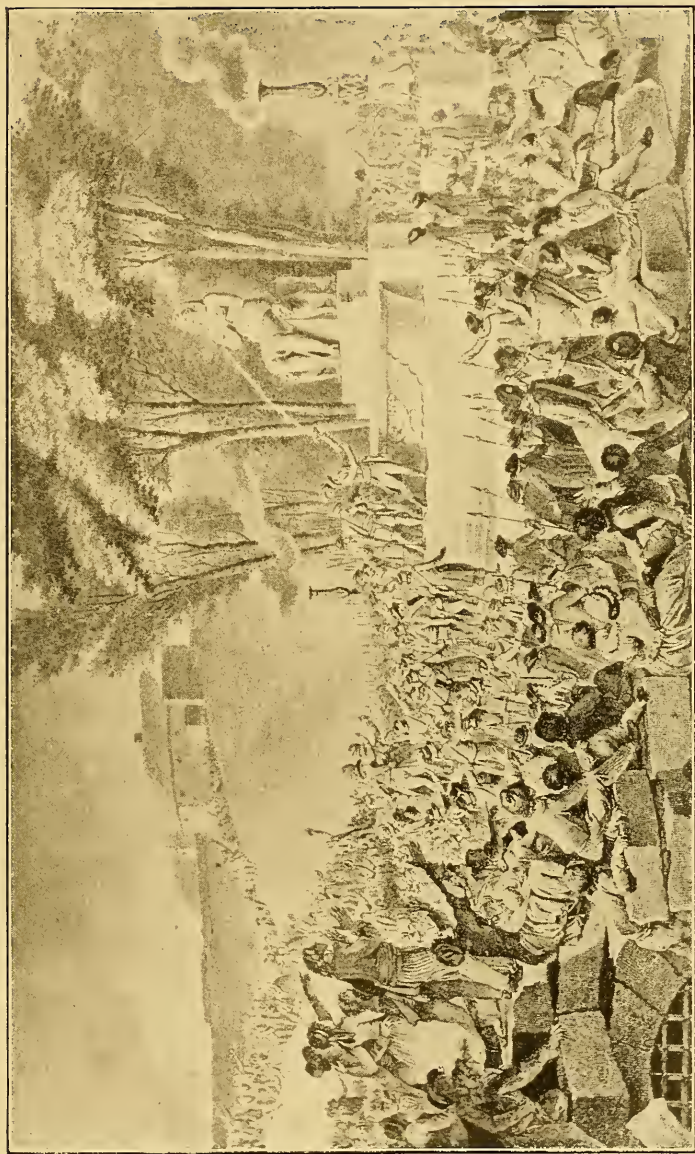
In the Champ de Mars the fête resolved itself into a spectacle unique for colour and movement. But the chief interest of the day centred on the Altar of the Fatherland, at the foot of which stood a model of the overthrown Bastille. To this altar, after the celebration of high mass by Talleyrand and two hundred priests clad in tricolour robes, there came Lafayette, as commander of the national guards, to swear, with uplifted sword, this oath of loyalty: "We swear to be faithful to the nation, to the law, to the king; to maintain with all our might the constitution decreed by the National Assembly, and accepted by the king; and to remain united to all the French by the indissoluble bonds of fraternity." After Talleyrand came the president of the assembly, and, last of all, the king and queen. And the rolling of drums, the clash of arms, the shouts of human throats, and the roar of many cannon proclaimed that the chief ceremony of the Fête of Fed-

eration had been accomplished. So frenzied was the rejoicing that those four hundred thousand little heeded the sudden summer storm which at that moment swept over the Champ de Mars and drenched them to the skin.

Besides, there were other days and festivities to follow. For five days the fête was prolonged, with jousting on the Seine, sumptuous banquets, and, to conclude all, a wild orgy of public dancing and merriment round the Bastille and in the Champs Élysées.

Five and twenty months later the ruins of the Bastille witnessed the opening scenes of another fête notable in the annals of old Paris. Many changes had taken place in the interval, chief among them being the deposition of Louis XVI and his execution. It was the former event, however, the overthrow of the monarchy on the Tenth of August of the previous year, which it was decided to celebrate on the same date of 1793. And that festival was to signalize the acceptance by the people of France of the latest constitution designed by the revolutionary leaders.

As with so many other fêtes of those turbulent days, the arrangements for the festival of the tenth of August were committed to the care of the artist Jacques Louis David, who is probably better remembered to-day for his portrait of Madame Récamier than for his strenuous labours as designer-in-chief



FÊTE OF THE TENTH OF AUGUST

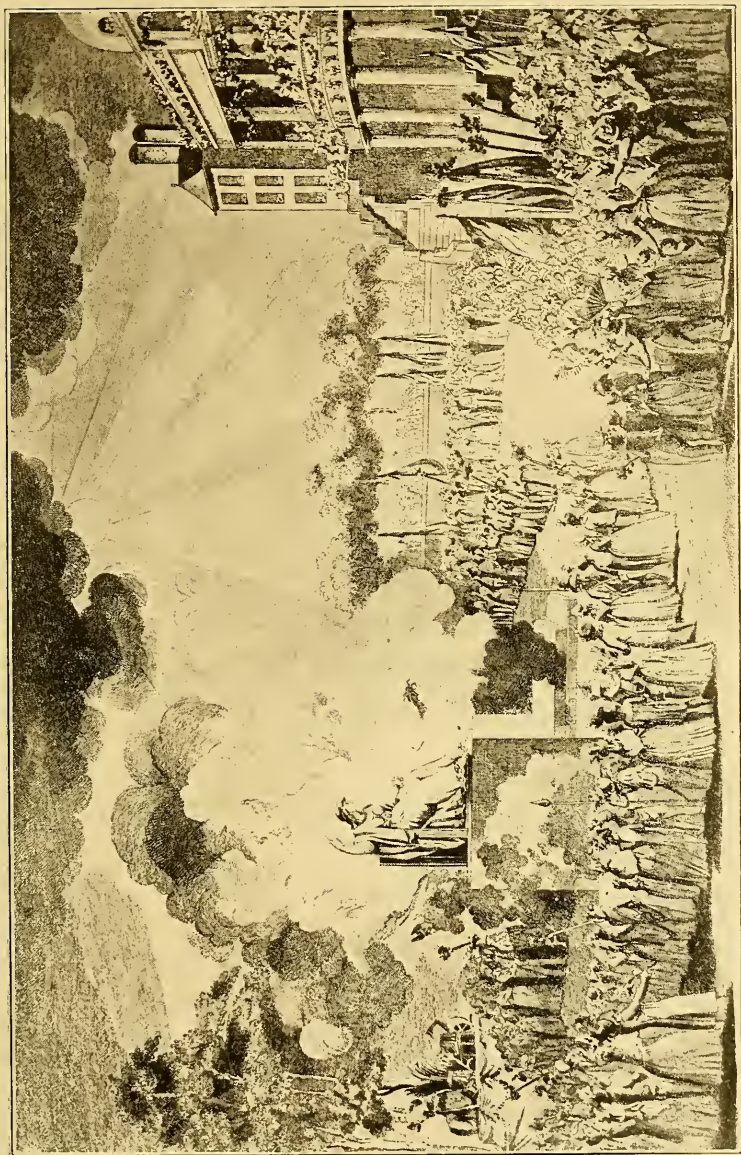
of the pageants of the Revolution. Not only did he design the details of the spectacle; he set the timetable for the day's proceedings. "All Frenchmen," he stipulated, "who wish to celebrate the Festival of Unity and Indivisibility will rise before the dawn, so that the touching scene of their gathering may be illumined by the sun's first rays." As already indicated, the venue of that "touching scene" was the site of the Bastille, the ruins of which were generously decorated with placards bearing pathetic quotations from the laments of those who had been imprisoned in that fortress. Amid the ruins of the prison stood a fountain in the form of a colossal statue of Nature, from each of whose breasts there poured a stream of water as symbolical of nature's fecundity.

To this fountain Hérault-Séchelles, the chief orator of the day, addressed a grandiloquent apostrophe, afterwards filling an agate goblet from one of its jets and sprinkling therewith the pedestal of the statue. But the occasion demanded from the voluble Séchelles a greater sacrifice than that, nothing less, in short, than that he fill the goblet again and drink its contents. Now Séchelles, as has been seen in an earlier chapter, preferred the wine of Chantilly at sixty francs a bottle, and a goblet of mere water must have been a nauseous draught. However, it had to be swallowed as part of the day's proceedings, and eighty-four deputies were obliged

to imitate that example of momentary temperance.

When the water-drinking had ended the procession set out on its progress to the Champ de Mars making four halts on the way. David had exercised all his ingenuity to make the parade worthy of the occasion, designing a banner on which was printed the Eye of Vigilance piercing a black cloud, providing an ark for the constitution, thrusting in the hands of deputies bunches of corn and fruit, linking the delegates in chains of tricolour ribbon, assigning white cradles to the babies from the Foundling Hospital, and paying special attention to that tumbrel which was laden with such emblems of royalty as imitation thrones, crowns, escutcheons, and the like. The latter were destined for a holocaust, for when the Place de la Révolution was reached, where the statue of Louis XV had been replaced by a plaster effigy of Liberty, the symbols of royalty were piled in a heap and set fire to by Séchelles to the accompaniment of another turgid apostrophe. The fête concluded late at night with the inevitable banquet and the usual promiscuous orgy of singing and dancing.

Many other fêtes figure in the annals of the French Revolution. The National Convention, as Edmond Biré remarked, understood that the people were ready to forgive anything in those who amused them. Many of those spectacles were blasphemous



FÊTE OF THE SUPREME BEING.

and most of them licentious. Whatever their pomp in daylight, they, like "the holy Fair" of Burns culminated at night in "haughmagandie." Human history has hardly recorded a more scandalous event than the Fête of Reason, the apotheosis of an actress of dubious reputation first in the hall of the Convention and then on the altar of Notre Dame. "Other mysteries," as Carlyle said, "seemingly of a Cabiric or even Paphian character" are best left in the obscurity of history. Hardly less revolting was Robespierre's Fête of the Supreme Being, which prompted one honest soul to exclaim, "With thy 'Supreme Being' thou beginnest to be a bore to me."

Even death itself was made a festival in those unbalanced times. Hence the bodies of Lepeletier and Marat were carried to their graves amid Davidian spectacles. The painter seems to have gloated over the artistic pose in which he found the body of "the Friend of the People," and so that body was shown in state in all its hideous nakedness and disease. Remembering, however, how swiftly one after another the revolutionary leaders plotted to send each other to the guillotine, it becomes necessary to seriously discount their oratorical laments for Lepeletier and Marat. They are too reminiscent of the scene which took place at the funeral of Murger. Speeches were to be made at the grave by Thierry and Maquet, and the mourners could not fail to no-

tice that the two orators were gesticulating and talking to each other in an unusually animated manner. It was taken for granted that they were vying with each other in politeness, but the illusion was shattered when Maquet was heard to exclaim, "If you insist on speaking first I'll chuck you down the hole!"

CHAPTER XI

THE THEATRES

WHAT is true of French literature, namely, that any sketch which ignores the drama overlooks what is almost the soul of that literature, would be equally true of any account of the festive life of old Paris which failed to include at least a brief history of the theatres.

In such a summary it is not necessary to dwell at length upon the part played by the church in the evolution of the drama. That there was a close connection between the religious pageant and the secular stage has been well established, although it is often overlooked that the antagonism which eventually sprang up between the clerics and actors in Paris was merely a reversion to the attitude which characterized the early church. The history of the conflict, indeed, provides another illustration of the facility with which the church has always adapted itself to the trend of secular thought when the necessity arose.

So far, then, as the origin of the theatre in Paris is concerned, the year 1402 may be taken as the real starting-point, especially as it was at that date the first playhouse was established. That momentous

innovation has to be placed to the credit of an amateur organization known as the *Confrérie de la Passion*, a society of artisan citizens drawing its membership from masons, locksmiths, carpenters and other skilled workmen. Earlier still, of course, the guilds of the various trades had performed mysteries as a feature of their annual celebrations; but the Brethren of the Passion seem to have been the first society which existed for the sole purpose of giving such spectacles. In the absence of any definite information, it may fairly be assumed that the society owed its existence to those enthusiastic performers in all the guilds who were not content with mere annual opportunities to display their dramaturgic accomplishments. They were neither the first nor the last dilettantes who have been lured to the professional footlights by success as amateurs.

Having devised a new Mystery of the Passion, which was to be spoken and not merely mimed, the Brethren arranged to present it regularly on Sundays and holy days. But at the start they were encountered by an unexpected obstacle. Encouraged by some sympathetic friends, they secured a hall in the village of Saint-Maur, but the authorities were so alarmed at this new departure that they intervened and prohibited the performances. Several years later the Brethren of the Passion appealed to Charles VI, and that monarch had been so entertained by their Mystery that he promptly issued an

edict authorizing them to present it as often as they liked. Armed with such a document, the Brethren at once began looking around for a suitable building in which to establish themselves, and they discovered a place to their liking in the hall connected with the Hôpital de la Trinité, close to the Porte St. Denis. In the hall of that hospice, then, the first Parisian stage was erected in 1402.

Of course it was not a secular stage. The répertoire of the Brethren was restricted to that Mystery which had so perturbed the puritans of Saint-Maur, and when they enlarged its contents it was in harmony with that type of religious drama. Besides, their scenic equipment was of a kind suitable only for such plays. The stage was constructed in three tiers, the lowest representing Hell, the second Palestine, and the third Paradise. On the latter, the highest of the three, stood a throne occupied by an actor who represented the Creator; the middle section was given up to angels and devils, who were in perpetual conflict; on the lowest tier was a dragon's mouth as the symbol of the underworld. Many of the speeches were chanted to organ accompaniment, but the greater part of the dialogue was spoken in the manner of modern stage declamation. The centre of action varied from time to time between the three tiers, and those players not immediately engaged sat round in full view of the audience. Practically the only comedy relief in the Mystery was

provided by the actor impersonating Satan, who was allowed to indulge in buffoonery to his heart's content. All this may not seem exhilarating to the modern playgoer, but in fifteenth-century Paris the enterprise of the Brethren proved exceedingly popular, as it was countenanced by the priests of the church, who went so far as to so re-arrange their hours of service that their congregation might be free to attend the performances at the Hôpital de la Trinité.

So popular, indeed, were the performances of the Brethren that it was not long before they were paid the compliment of imitation. During the first half of the fifteenth century, then, there came into existence two other dramatic societies, which played a notable part in the development of the Parisian theatre. The first of these was founded by the Clercs de la Basoche, that is, the guild of lawyers' clerks; the second by a band of bourgeois youths who assumed the name of Les Enfants Sans-Souci.

As may be inferred from the occupation of the first and the name of the second, neither the Basochians nor the Care-free Children were likely to compete with the Brethren in their own particular line. Nor did they. The Basochians and the Care-free Children struck out a path for themselves. The former, then, specialized in the production of Moralities and Farces; the latter introduced what was called the "Sotie," that is, a kind of comedy

of manners, or a play in which political satire predominated. In one respect the Basochians had, for a time, the better of their rivals; as members of the powerful legal guild they had the right to use the hall of the Palace of Justice for their performances, whereas the Care-free Children had to present their plays in the markets. By and by, however, the Brethren entered into an agreement with the Care-free Children whereby the latter, in return for a part of their receipts, were allowed the use of the stage at the Hôpital de la Trinité after each performance of the Mystery. That arrangement must have been exceedingly edifying to the spectators. To compare it with things with which one is familiar, one has merely to imagine a church now occupied by a preacher denouncing the sins and vanities of the world and immediately afterwards given over to theatricals performing "The Merry Widow." But the arrangement between the Brethren of the Passion and the Care-free Children is suggestive of the transition of the drama from sacred to secular.

For the Soties of the Care-free Children, equally with the Moralities and Farces of the Basochians, had nothing in common with the Mysteries of the Brethren. While the latter concerned themselves with such abstract matters as Biblical stories or legends of the saints, the former grappled with life in Paris as it was there and then, and did not spare either the tyranny of the state or the vice of the in-

dividual. The early theatre, then, became a tribune, "the voice by which the people expressed their grievances or showed their approbation. On the one hand, in effect, it made a violent attack (under the cloak of jesting) on contemporary institutions, where they were absurd or arbitrary; on the other, it awarded praise to the ruling powers when they deserved well of the nation." As a consequence of the freedom with which they ridiculed institutions and high personages, the Basochians were constantly either in hot water or in prison. And they cared as little for the one as the other. When Parliament commanded them to eliminate offensive passages from their farces, they ignored the order; when a censor was appointed, they ignored him, too. Imprisonment on bread and water, threats of banishment and the confiscation of their property, and public whipping, were powerless to stem their satire. The Care-free Children were not quite so obdurate; as they and their president, the Prince of Fools, were often called upon to take part in the revels of the court, they were more amenable to discipline.

But when Louis XII ascended the throne a golden age dawned for the Basochians and their rivals. "My courtiers," the king said, "never tell me the unvarnished truth, and as long as I am ignorant of the truth I cannot know how the kingdom is governed. The troupes of the king of the Basochians



THE KING OF THE BASOCHIANS.

and the Prince of Fools have my authority to expose any abuse they may discover, whether at court or in the town, and to ridicule whom they please. I do not wish to be exempt from their attacks; but if they say a word against the Queen I will hang them all." That plenary license lasted all through the king's reign and was utilized so freely that in one *Sotie* the Care-free Children entertained their patrons with a broad satire of Pope Julius II, but as soon as Louis XII passed away the Parliament once more attempted a censorship of the theatre.

Meanwhile the Brethren of the Passion were discovering that the Farces played in their hall by the Care-free Children were becoming far more popular with the crowd than their Mysteries, and they attempted to meet the situation by giving more and ever more emphasis to the buffoonery of their sacred dramas. An event happened in 1539 which caused them to accentuate that worldly policy. In that year they had to give up their hall in the *Hôpital de la Trinité*, but, in 1543, after a brief sojourn in another building, they purchased a part of the *Hôtel de Bourgogne* in the *Rue Manconseil* and established themselves there.

As that new theatre played so important a part in the dramatic history of Paris and was the direct ancestor of the famous *Comédie-Française*, a description of its appearance in the mid-sixteenth century will be read with interest. The building " bore little

resemblance to what we nowadays call a theatre, and approximated more nearly to an office. The hall was vast, but low, in comparison with its dimensions, which gave accommodation for an audience of more than two thousand persons. The stage was of extraordinary depth, since it was constructed for the representation of Mysteries which involved a considerable number of actors. In performing plays which demanded little staging, the space was reduced by means of tapestry curtains, hung from the middle of the vast stage. The lighting, during the performance, consisted of a row of candles in front of the stage, which required constant snuffing. In addition, there was above the actors a chandelier with four branches, hung in the air, with four great yellow wax-candles. There were two superposed rows of boxes, and each box, fitted with wooden benches, could contain some dozen spectators, plunged in semi-obscurity. The pit, in which the audience stood, or moved about at will, was no better lighted than the boxes." Apparently, then, the Brethren had devoted more attention to the equipment of their stage than to providing for the comfort of their patrons; whoever suffered, they were determined to have ample space and machinery for the performance of their Mysteries.

But those Mysteries were soon to be numbered among the things of the past. It seems that the license the Brethren had allowed themselves in un-

derscoring the ribald elements of their plays had given offence to the Parliament; men of all creeds awoke at last to the suspicion that such buffoonery in association with so-called religious plays tended to bring religion itself into contempt; consequently in 1548 the Brethren were commanded to abandon their Mysteries and strictly forbidden to appear in any save secular plays. The strange thing, however, was that the Brethren, notwithstanding the horse-play they had introduced into their religious dramas, were still too pious to undertake straight comedy or farce, and so they solved their problem by letting their theatre to the Care-free players. From that time the church resumed its old hostility to the stage. While the Mysteries were still being performed it could not consistently break with the performers; they were, in a sense, doing the work of the church; but as soon as those Mysteries were prohibited and the stage of the Hôtel de Bourgogne taken possession of by actors of mere farces and comedies, the priesthood began to once more regard the theatre as an agency of the devil. As Frederick Hawkins put it in his interesting "Annals of the French Stage," the Parisian priests henceforward "reprehended play-going as incompatible with true devotion, purity of life, and sobriety of thought. They condemned the actor to a sort of social outlawry, declaring that unless he solemnly forswore his profession he could not receive the Holy Com-

munion or be entitled to Christian burial. In other words, partly from an ascetic desire to minimize the pleasures of existence, but chiefly from a mistaken dread of the extension of popular intelligence beyond very narrow limits, the anathemas launched by the primitive Church against the abomination of the Roman circus were virtually applied to an art which in point of morality was distinctly above the accepted standards of the time, and the records of which were much cleaner than those of the antagonist it now had to face." This antagonism was continued for many generations and inflicted on actors and actresses such sufferings and indignities as would have been a disgrace to barbarianism. Yet they were perpetrated in the name of religion!

But so far as the theatre itself was concerned the enmity of the Church was as futile as the curse immortalized in "The Jackdaw of Rheims."

For the Brethren of the Passion were at least shrewd men of business. Not only were they willing to accept from the Care-free Children hard cash for the rent of their theatre in the Hôtel de Bourgogne, thus conniving at the type of play in which they shrunk from appearing themselves, but they were insistent in protecting such pecuniary rights as were secured to them by the edict of Charles VI. Hence, when, late in the sixteenth century, strolling players and university students attempted performances in rivalry of those at the Hôtel de Bourgogne

the Brethren promptly intervened. A little later, however, the situation was simplified for the new dramatic aspirants, for about 1582 both the Basochians and the Care-free Children abandoned their theatrical enterprises. It was at this juncture, then, that the Brethren of the Passion, to avoid having an empty theatre on their hands, rented their hall at the Hôtel de Bourgogne to a travelling company, an act which definitely established the secular drama as part of the life of Paris. This was in 1588.

From that date events moved quickly. Thus, within little more than a dozen years a second theatre, the Marais, had been established and a company of Italian players settled in the city. The Brethren, as lessees of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, did their utmost to resist these invasions of their territory, but after making themselves unpopular by securing the suppression of a theatrical booth at the Fair of St. Germain they compromised by granting the fair comedians and other rivals a license to act on the payment of a fee for each performance. It was under such conditions that the second playhouse, the Théâtre du Marais, was added to the amusements of Paris.

Henceforward the rivalry between the two theatres took a different form; it was now a question of securing the best plays and the most accomplished players. Consequently when, in 1632, an attempt was made to establish a third theatre in the Rue

Michel-Comte, no opposition was offered by the two already in existence. The project, however, was viewed with alarm by the residents of the district; they petitioned the authorities to the effect that the rue was exceedingly narrow, and drew a woeful picture of the inconvenience they would suffer if the street were blocked by coaches, etc.; and their prayer was granted.

Hence the contest for theatrical supremacy in Paris was for many years confined to the Hôtel de Bourgogne and the Théâtre du Marais, and they fluctuated in public favour according to the plays they staged or the talents of their actors. Perhaps on the whole the balance inclined to the first-named, for by 1617 its company was known as the Troupe Royale. And when their ranks were suddenly depleted by the death of three of the most popular actors, Louis XIII ordered six members of the Marais company to join the cast at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. The same monarch, by the way, has to be credited with an edict which did much to give a high tone to the drama in his reign.

Yet it was not to royal patronage the theatres owed their greatest debt; that was due to the three men who between them may be said to have created the drama of France — Corneille, Molière, and Racine. Of course there were others who had prepared the way, such as Hardy, Viaud, Rotrou (whom Voltaire held to be the real founder of the

French theatre), Mairet; but with the advent of Corneille, and especially with his "Le Cid," the old type of play passed away and the new was born. Practically all his forerunners had owed something to the old Mysteries or crude farces of the middle ages; he made a departure in that he "combined art with vitality, and for the first time produced a play which was at once a splendid piece of literature and an immense popular success." It was toward the close of 1636 that the "Cid" was produced and its author's confidence in its merits was abundantly justified. "The double strife between love and duty," wrote Mr. Hawkins, "was depicted with matchless force and sympathy. The haughty spirit of the great vassals of mediæval Spain shone forth in all its energy. Imaginative power, vivid portraiture of character, glowing energy of thought and expression, — nothing seemed wanting. The effect of such a play at a time when the romantic spirit had not died away may be well conceived. The audience were worked up to something like a frenzy of admiration, and the curtain fell upon by far the greatest triumph yet achieved on the French stage."

Molière counted for still more in the development of the Parisian theatre inasmuch as he was an accomplished actor and a skilful manager in addition to being a great dramatist. Some seven years after the production of the "Cid" of Corneille the man who was to create modern French comedy was be-

ginning that rough experience as a strolling player which proved so valuable a training-school for his unique mimetic gifts. For, in his twenty-first year, Molière abandoned the legal profession to which his father had designated him and definitely entered upon his career as an actor. Nor did his failure in Paris turn him from his purpose. Notwithstanding the debts incurred through the indifference of the public to the plays offered by himself and his company at the Théâtre Illustre, he and his comrades in 1646 set out with brave hearts for a tour of the country towns.

They might have been less hopeful could they have foreseen that twelve years were to elapse ere they returned. And perhaps they would not have been so stout of heart if they could have realized the miseries and vicissitudes of those wander years. Molière, however, never looked back or regretted his choice. Nor did he ever lose sight of the purpose on which he had set his heart — the ambition to return to Paris and reverse the failure of his earlier years. In 1658, then, he was at Rouen still planning how he might obtain a hearing in the capital. “After several secret journeys thither,” wrote a chronicler of the late seventeenth century, “he was fortunate enough to secure the patronage of Monsieur, the king’s only brother, who granted him his protection, and permitted the company to take his name, presenting them as his servants to the



THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE IN THE HALL OF THE LOUVRE.

king and the queen mother.” The outcome of this stroke of fortune was that Molière was summoned to perform before Louis XIV and his court on the 24th of October, 1658.

But the royal command also stipulated the play for the occasion, which was none other than Corneille’s “Nicomède,” a somewhat dull tragedy of political life. Now the forte of Molière and his company was comedy, and hence they must have regarded the king’s selection with rueful feelings. It was ordeal enough for the strolling players to appear before the court of France; to ask for tragedy from comedians seemed equivalent to foredooming them to abject failure. And, to make matters worse, the audience in the hall of the old Louvre included, in addition to the king, Anne of Austria, Cardinal Mazarin, and a crowd of courtiers, not a few of the actors from the Hôtel de Bourgogne.

Molière and his comrades, as a friendly biographer noted “were less at home in the stately lines of Corneille than in the quick and vivacious dialogue of ‘L’Etourdi,’ and the trepidation incident to the occasion must have rendered them unable to do anything like justice to themselves. ‘Nicomède’ finished, Molière, perhaps sensible of their shortcomings, took a very unusual step. He made a speech from the stage. He thanked his majesty for his goodness in bearing the defects of the troupe, who had naturally felt some agitation on finding them-

selves before so august an assembly, and who, in their eagerness to have the honour of playing before the greatest king in the world, had forgotten that he had already much better actors in his service. ‘As,’ continued Molière, ‘his majesty has so far endured our country manners, I venture, very humbly, to hope that I may be permitted to give one of the little pieces which have procured me some reputation, and with which I have been fortunate enough to amuse the provinces.’ The king assented by retaining his seat; the audience, who but a few minutes previous had been preparing to disperse, resumed an attitude of attention. The little piece referred to was ‘Le Docteur Amoureux,’ one of Molière’s earliest farces. The result must have more than equalled his most roseate anticipations. He quickly converted a failure into a triumph. Everybody present had much ado to restrain the merriment produced.”

Nor did the triumph of Molière end with the fall of the curtain. Louis XIV had been so much entertained with the “little piece” that a few hours later he commanded Molière and his company to remain in Paris.

And the problem of where they were to play was soon solved. A little before this time, at the instigation of Cardinal Mazarin, a company of Italian actors had been given the use of a hall in the Hôtel du Petit Bourbon, and as they performed only on

three days of the week that hall was available on the other days for Molière and his company. There, then, the newcomers established themselves, and, after a few futile experiments with the plays of Corneille, fully justified the favour of the king as soon as they confined themselves to that type of comedy in which they had been so successful in the provinces. About a year later, too, their versatile manager wrote a one-act comedy, “*Les Precieuses Ridicules*,” which greatly enhanced their and his reputation. Those were the days, it will be remembered, when the affectations of the salons and the inane sentimentality of the de Scudéri romances were the fashion in Paris, and Molière, greatly daring, set himself the task of holding all that triviality up to ridicule. Hence his sketch of “*The Affected Misses*,” which one enthusiastic playgoer interrupted with the exclamation, “*Courage, Molière, that’s good comedy!*” and another praised to the extent of saying, “*It cost me thirty sous to see it, but I laughed for more than ten pistoles.*”

Some two years after Molière’s return to Paris the Hôtel du Petit Bourbon was pulled down, and it was then, by the permission of the king, he and his company took possession of Richelieu’s old theatre in the Palais Royal. There he remained for the rest of his life, producing year after year those comedies which are among the glories of French dramatic literature. Neither the fame he won as

an actor and dramatist, nor the marked favour of the king, nor the intrigues of his rival players at the other theatres, nor the sorrows of his private life wrought any change in Molière's lovable nature. And never was his devotion to his profession and his attachment to his company more convincingly illustrated than by his action when offered election to the French Academy. That was an honour already greatly in esteem with men of letters; it was an honour, too, of which no writer of his day was more worthy than Molière. But a condition was attached to the election; he must give up his profession as an actor. That decided him to decline the offer. "My sense of honour," he said, "leaves me no alternative." And when he was sarcastically asked what honour there could be in blackening his face and playing the buffoon on a public stage, he at once rejoined, "More than a hundred persons are benefited by my appearing in a piece; and I will not insult a profession which I love, and to which I am so materially indebted, by purchasing personal advantage at the cost of throwing a slur upon it." And so the name of Molière was never included among the Forty. But a later generation of Immortals made amends by placing his bust in their meeting-place with the graceful inscription: "Nothing was wanting to his glory; he was wanting to ours."

As Molière's return to Paris in 1658 altered the theatrical situation in the city, so his death in 1673



JEAN BAPTISTE POQUELIN MOLIERE.

resulted in another readjustment of the playhouses. The widow of the dramatist at once assumed the management of the company at the Palais Royal, but a few months later, owing to the king granting the use of that auditorium for opera, she found herself without a stage to play on. There was, however, another theatre available in the Rue Mazarine which she was able to purchase, and thither the "Comédiens du Roi" removed. Seven years later their ranks were strengthened by the players from the Hôtel de Bourgogne owing to a whim of the king who, by that date, had come to believe that the drama was suffering from competition.

Molière's widow proved to be a better manager than she had been a wife. At the outset of her career a "magnificent success" was prophesied for her, and the forecast was abundantly realized. Yet in the second year of her management an incident happened which threatened her total ruin. During a performance of "Circe," a play by Thomas Corneille, a man who had secured one of the seats on the stage accosted Mme. Molière in the wings with all the freedom of a privileged lover, and at the close of the play followed her with equal confidence to her dressing-room. "May I speak freely before this girl?" he asked, alluding to the dresser. "Pardon me, Monsieur," replied the astonished actress; "there are no secrets between us, and you are at liberty to explain your intrusion before everybody."

To this the interloper replied angrily that as she had failed to keep her appointment he had come to the theatre to convince himself that no evil had befallen her, and that he had nothing to reproach himself with. More amazed than ever, Mme. Molière demanded what grounds her visitor had for suggesting they had met before, and to her astonishment heard him declare that she had met him some twenty times in a house of ill fame, etc. At that she ordered all the company to be called to her room, but when they had assembled, the stranger, before the actress could explain her purpose, repeated his assertion that Mme. Molière had often accompanied him to the house of a procuress, and wound up by declaring that the necklace she was wearing, and which he snatched from her throat, was one of his presents.

Without wasting further words the actress had the police summoned and gave her accuser into custody. But his examination made matters look all the worse for Mme. Molière. It transpired that he was a M. Lescot, a Président from Grenoble, who, having become enamoured of the actress from seeing her on the stage, and failing to obtain an introduction to her, had subsequently met a woman named Ledoux, who thought she might be able to secure him the desired meeting. And when he returned to Ledoux's house some days later he found she had been as good as her word, for the actress was there to receive him. They met many times,

and once, when out for a walk, he purchased her a necklace at a shop in the Quai des Orfèvres. The only stipulation Mme. Molière made was that he was not to speak to her at the theatre, and he respected that request until the day when she failed to keep an appointment.

And the strange thing was that the necklace part of Lescot's story was corroborated by the jeweller from whom the purchase was made; when confronted with the actress he was certain that she was the woman for whom it had been bought. All that remained was for the woman Ledoux to be produced to complete the sordid story. And then Mme. Molière's ruin would be complete, for even Louis XIV would have objected to an actress in one of his companies concerting with a procuress. Just, however, when the outlook was blackest, the woman Ledoux was run to earth, and owned that she had been guilty of substitution. Among her clients she had a girl named Tourelle, who was not only amazingly like Mme. Molière in appearance but was proficient in imitating many of her mannerisms. This substitute was also arrested shortly afterwards and fully confessed her share in the fraud.

That whim of Louis XIV referred to above was an important event in the stage annals of Paris. His edict commanding the players of the Hôtel de Bourgogne to join forces with their fellow actors at the Théâtre Guénégaud in the Rue Mazarine

marked the birth of the famous Comédie-Française, or Théâtre Français as it is sometimes called. The object of the king in ordering this union was to “ render the representations of comedies more complete, and to afford the players opportunity of perfecting themselves ” in their profession. As if to accentuate the more complete staging of the plays a revival of Corneille’s “ Andromède ” was distinguished by a real horse being cast for the role of Pegasus. The animal acquitted itself to perfection, pawing and snorting in a realistic manner, owing, no doubt, to its having been nearly starved and then excited by a vision of a man in the wings holding out a basket of oats.

After nine years’ occupancy of the theatre in the Rue Mazarine, the “ Comédiens du Roi ” were once more obliged to shift their quarters. It seems that the pupils of the adjacent College Mazarin were disturbed by the commotion of the playgoers, and at length a protest was addressed to the king. And as Louis XIV was now under the sobering influence of Madame de Maintenon he heard the complaint with sympathy and ordered the players to seek another theatre elsewhere. It was not an easy matter to find a suitable building, but success at last rewarded the search, and in April, 1689, the company took possession of a new home on the Rue des Fossés-St.-Germain, the thoroughfare now known as the Rue de l’Ancienne Comédie. Many years later they were

to return to that Palais Royal where the modern Théâtre Français perpetuates Molière's early association with the mansion of Richelieu.

As may be gathered from the foregoing sketch, the theatrical history of Paris during the seventeenth century was one of many changes. And as the century drew to a close several events happened which cast something of a gloom over the players, most of which could be traced to the pietistic influence of Madame de Maintenon. First in order came the retirement of Racine from dramatic authorship, which may have been due to genuine religious feelings or, on the other hand, to a desire to stand well with the king's austere wife; next Louis XIV gradually cooled in his ardour for the stage; and, finally, the precarious hold the players had on royal favour was startlingly illustrated by the dismissal of the Italian company. The latter had been allowed the use of the Hôtel de Bourgogne from the date of the foundation of the Comédie-Française, and doubtless imagined they had a secure position among the entertainers of Paris. In the early months of 1697, however, they presumed too much upon that confidence. Finding that they could win great applause by introducing into their plays satirical portraits of high personages, they announced a piece entitled "La Fausse Prude," which, so the rumour ran, was to hold Madame de Maintenon up to ridicule. Intimation of that fact reached the ears of the king's wife, with

the result that on her complaining to Louis he at once issued a decree ordering the Italian players to return to their native land. Nor would he listen to their plea for mercy. "You have no reason," he said, "to complain that Cardinal Mazarin tempted you from Italy. You came to France on foot, and you have made enough to return in your carriages." So the decree was enforced, and Paris knew the Italian comedians no more until the Duke of Orleans became Regent and in 1718 allowed them to return to their old quarters at the Hôtel de Bourgogne.

Few mourned the death of Louis XIV. He had outlived his glory. The corpse of the "Grand Monarque" was left to the care of a few servants and was "saluted all along the road to St. Denis by the curses of a noisy crowd sitting in the cabarets, celebrating his death by drinking more than their fill as a compensation for having suffered too much hunger during his lifetime." If the theatrical entertainers of Paris did not parade their relief at the king's death in so coarse a manner, their inward rejoicing was probably just as sincere.

No sooner had the Duke of Orleans firmly grasped the reins of the Regency than the theatres began to flourish as they had never done before. It is true, as Paul Lacroix noted, that the old court party maintained its aloof attitude, "but the younger court party was only too anxious to make up for lost time. And thus the Regency made the fortune of the thea-

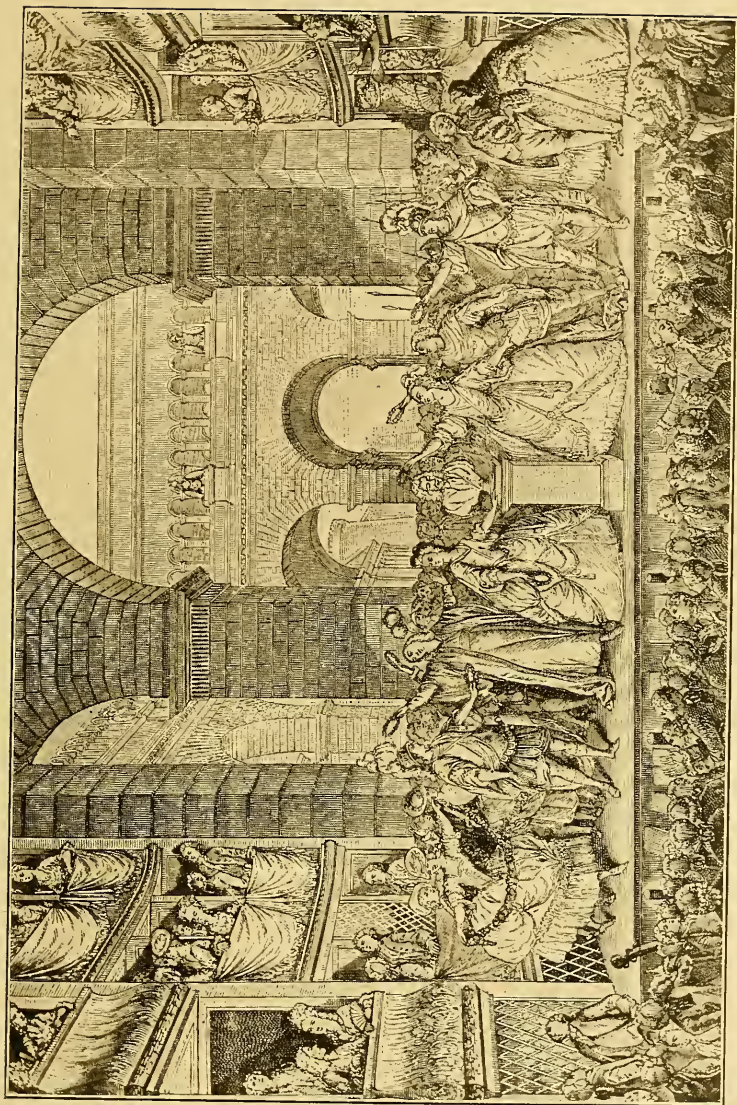
tres, which were nearly ruined by the austerity which marked the close of the previous reign. The court of the Palais Royal set the fashion, and the Regent, or some of his household, assisted nearly every evening, in state or in private, either at the Opera or the Comédie." In fact, leaving modern times out of account, the period from the death of Louis XIV to the eve of the Revolution was the Golden Age of the theatrical annals of Paris.

But there was a dark side to the picture. Nothing mitigated that bitter enmity of the Church towards the players as a class which began with the prohibition of the old Mysteries.

Even royal influence was ineffective to change that hostility. Louis XIII issued a declaration in 1641 expressing a desire that the calling of actors should not "expose them to blame or prejudice their reputation in public intercourse;" and Louis XIV, in addition to marking his personal friendship for Molière by many special favours, announced it as his opinion that the profession of an actor was not incompatible with the quality of a gentleman. But those royal dicta were in vain. The priesthood persisted in regarding actors as unfit to partake of the communion and unworthy of "Christian burial." And so the corpse of Molière was buried with less reverence than would have been paid to the body of a pauper. "Most of the clergy, Bossuet not excepted, seized upon the circumstances attending his

death as a means of affixing an additional stigma to the stage. For example, contrary to the spirit and letter of their Master's teaching, they maintained that, having been overtaken by mortal illness during his performance, he was to be regarded as an object of Divine displeasure." Sixty years later the riteless burial of Molière was repeated in the case of Adrienne Lecouvreur, whose wasted body was committed to the earth with less ceremony than attends the sepulture of a dead cat. The horror of that shameful indignity moved Voltaire to appeal to the players. "Declare to the world," he urged, "that you will not exercise your profession, until you, the paid servants of the king, are treated like other citizens in the king's service." But they had not the courage to act upon his advice. Indeed, when, a generation later, a lawyer wrote a book in protest against the intolerable bigotry of the Church, impelled thereto because an actress had been refused the rites of matrimony as an excommunicated person, his book was burned by the common hangman and his name erased from the roll of advocates!

Naturally, as was the case with the inns and taverns and cafés and salons, the events of the French Revolution left their impress on the history of the theatres of Paris. Even in the early days of that upheaval the stage quickly became a mirror of the times. Here, for example, is a significant passage from an inedited letter of the poet Samuel Rogers,



COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE ON THE NIGHT OF VOLTAIRE'S APOTHEOSIS.

who was in Paris in February, 1790. "In the evening," he wrote, "we saw a new piece. A nobleman just released from a long confinement by illness and ignorant of the Revolution, is shocked to find that his servants are out of livery, and to hear himself addressed without a title. His daughter, whom he has destined for a convent, is in love with a Bourgeois, and he writes for a *lettre du cachet* to confine him. To crown all, his creditors have the insolence to demand the payment of his debts, but after much point and equivoque he is at last brought to reason. It was received with the most rapturous applause." Equally ominous was another incident which took place later in the same year. The chronicler was an English earl, who thus described the event in a letter to a friend: "A few nights ago 'Richard Cœur de Lion' was acted, and a woman of fashion was absolutely forced to leave the house, because she clapped with too much violence while the famous song, 'O Richard, O mon roi!' was singing; a hundred fellows started up together roaring, '*à bas la femme en éventail blanc*,' and would not suffer the actors to proceed till this Aristocrate left the house. The moment she was gone, there was a most violent applause; and a perfect calm succeeded."

Neither Rogers nor the earl gave the name of the theatre in which they had seen those signs of the times. There were at least a dozen playhouses open, and all that can be said with certainty is that

the theatre concerned was neither the Comédie-Française nor the Théâtre Italién. Even so late as January, 1793, both those houses favoured royalist productions.

Not that the Revolution was without sympathizers among the actors of at least the Comédie-Française. On the contrary, such popular members of the company as Talma, Dugazon, and Mme. Vestris, with several more, soon declared themselves on the side of the revolutionary leaders and left the Comédie to play elsewhere. But the greater number of the king's servants remained faithful to the cause of royalism. That loyalty was not preserved save at the cost of suffering and courage. Fleury put on record the pang he felt when, as he passed through the lobbies of the theatre, he saw effaced from the box-doors the names of those comrades who had deserted. 'The daub of paint over the words 'Loge de M. Talma' was as distressing to me as the obliteration of the names of Mademoiselle Desgarcins, Dugazon, and Madame Vestris. Formerly, in the days of our friendship, I had been in the habit of giving a familiar tap at the door of Dugazon's box, and my comrade never failed to welcome me by some good-humoured sally. I was fool enough to make the wonted signal on the present occasion, first looking round to see that nobody was near, and then slily giving three knocks on the door. The hollow echo of the empty box was the only answer I re-

ceived, and I glided away with increased dejection." Nor did Fleury recover his spirits until he reflected that after all the majority of the company had remained faithful to the traditions of the theatre.

Such devotion was proof of more than ordinary courage. For, as they gained the upper hand, the revolutionary leaders did their best to use all the theatres in the interests of their propaganda. Against that tyranny the Comédie-Française held out to the last hour. Consequently that playhouse became the rallying-ground of the friends of law and order. And when Jean Louis Laya wrote his "Ami des Lois," that trenchant indictment of mob-rule with its thinly veiled characterizations of Robespierre and Marat the Comédie company immediately put it in rehearsal.

No play produced at the Comédie-Française created such tense interest as "The Friend of the Law." While still rehearsing the comedy the actors were warned that the Commune had an eye upon them, and that some members of the Convention were watching for an excuse to interfere. Heedless of those ominous hints, the actors went on with their preparations, and when the day came for the first performance the theatre was besieged from an early hour in the afternoon by an immense crowd. The house was, of course, packed to its utmost capacity, and the play was received with unparalleled enthusiasm. Those scenes were repeated at each per-

formance; playgoers waited for hours in the streets; tickets were retailed at fabulous premiums; and each audience was frenzied in its approval of every line which appealed for moderation, justice and honour.

Of course the revolutionary leaders were furious. In their newspapers they demanded the suppression of the play, the arrest of Laya and the actors, and an assault upon the theatre; at the Jacobins Club they indulged in fierce denunciations and threats. The result was that in the municipal council an order was passed forbidding any further performance of "The Friend of the Law," but by the time that order was placarded on the walls of the theatre another immense audience had gathered inside. Mayor Chambon, however, forced his way to the stage before the curtain rose, and was proceeding to announce the decision of the council when his voice was drowned with angry shouts of, "The play! The play!" In the end the audience was pacified by the promise that a messenger should be at once dispatched to the Convention to ascertain whether the municipal authorities had any power to censure stage plays. The answer was not long in coming, and as it was in the negative the performance was begun once more amid a scene of wild enthusiasm. But that was the last performance. Before the day announced for its repetition, the revolutionary leaders issued a fresh decree and ordered the "frothy

general " Santerre to see that it was carried out.

And a few months later the players of the Comédie reaped the reward of their courage. No matter what piece they presented they were the objects of suspicion. And, finally, when they staged the " Pamela " of Français de Neufchâteau, scarcely a sentence of which was without its application to the lawless events of the hour, the performers were proclaimed a gang of aristocrats and incontinently thrown into prison.

With the arrest of the Comédie company " finis " was written to the annals of the theatres of old Paris. In the name of " liberty " the stage passed under a tyranny of the most despotic type. Laya had to seek safety in flight, and several persons who were found to possess a copy of his " The Friend of the Law " were sent to the guillotine. And the Convention, in addition to ordering that the theatres should perform once every week such plays as inculcated " the love of liberty," registered a decree that " every theatre, in which any performance, tending to revive royalty, shall be audaciously represented, shall be shut up, and the managers punished with exemplary severity." And to complete the good work it was ordained that the " Marseilles " hymn should be sung at the close of all theatrical entertainments.

Something more than natural pride in his profes-

sion convinced the comedian Fleury that a collection of the play-bills of Parisian theatres would furnish the most valuable annals of the city's history. That is certainly true for the period beginning with the theatrical enterprise of the Brethren of the Passion and ending with the Reign of Terror. No memory has survived of even the names of thousands of the plays performed during those four centuries, but those which have been preserved from oblivion are sufficient to show how faithfully the theatres reflected the life of bygone generations. Whether satirizing the fops of the salons, or deriding the pretentious incompetence of the doctors, or depicting the boisterous revels of the taverns and the academic discussions of the cafés, the players were indeed "the abstract and brief chronicles" of the life of old Paris.

THE END.

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